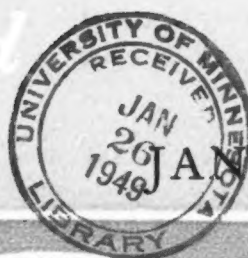


THE NEW ENGLISH
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VOLUME II. [NEW SERIES] NO. 1



JANUARY 1949

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NEW YEAR COMMENTARY

PERHAPS the most disturbing feature of the world in which we live is the systematic corruption of public opinion. Behind the iron curtain many tens of millions of people have been persuaded, if we are correctly informed, that hordes of hungry and vengeful capitalists are preparing to descend on their lands and cities. Energized by that belief, millions of people are there engaged preparing for a war which they think of as a necessary and honourable war of defence, but which in fact will be, if it takes place, a wholly unnecessary war of aggression. This corruption of opinion is not the result, as, for instance, are so many Anglo-Irish antagonisms, of deep-seated prejudices, rooted in history. It is the deliberate act of an autocracy itself determined on aggressive war and determined to get popular support for that war by any means in its power. As it happens, all the necessary means are at its disposal. There is no access at any level behind the iron curtain to authentic news and all sources of information are tainted. False history, false science and false statistics have corrupted the *intelligentsia* as deeply as government propaganda has corrupted the masses, and the corrective of free intercourse with other nations and other literatures is effectively withheld.

All this the western Socialists easily understand and honestly abhor, but they are no more capable of withstanding the temptation to create a false public opinion in their own support than are the dictators at the Kremlin. As yet, the direct control of opinion has not been attempted, although there are ominous signs of an impending attack on the freedom of the schools and universities. Every fiscal device, however, is systematically used. Living on subsidized food, in subsidized houses and with full employment, the majority of weekly wage earners begin the new year not indeed contented but still optimistic. Pay packets have increased and are increasing. The cost of living has been pegged with a great measure of success. The threat of a strongly deflationary policy directed to forcing a large transfer of labour from non-essential and luxury trades into agriculture, coal-mining and the textile industries has not materialized and the general anticipation is that it will

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not. Further, the new year will almost certainly see further subsidization of the lower range income groups, financed either by a further direct levy on capital, by a big increase in death duties, or a higher profits tax. Everything, in short, will be done to ensure that, by 1950, everything in the garden is rosier for the majority of voters.

IT would be churlish and ignorant to deny that behind these policies lies also a genuine and heartfelt desire to lighten the lot of the poorer sections of the community, but the warnings by the Government itself, both as to the need for greatly increased output and as to the failure to achieve it in many of the key industries, are almost sufficient in themselves to prove that the policy adopted cannot in the long run achieve its aim. Greatly increased food subsidies have already been found necessary and only a month ago fish was added to the subsidized list. And the pressure is rising. Every day sees demands for more wages or shorter hours or easier conditions, simultaneously with growing complaints against austerities and restrictions. This statement may seem at first sight to contradict the statement made above that the wage earners as a whole face the new year in an optimistic mood; indeed, as far as the black-coated worker is concerned, there is grave and justified discontent. Broadly speaking, however, the industrial wage earner is contented, partly because he has so far got what he has asked for, mainly because he is optimistic of getting still more in 1949. I fancy that he will, and I fancy also that, whatever is done, production will at best remain at its present level. No part of the blame for that rests properly on the shoulders of the industrial worker, whose attitude is determined by his judgment on a situation which he has not been allowed to see in its true colours.

There was never a time in living memory when the consequences of a false public opinion were likely to be more disastrous. The failure of Socialism as a panacea for increasing production, reducing costs and concentrating the national effort on essentials is now patent even to the Socialist party. This is made clear as daylight by the extremely important series of articles on "Socialist Stocktaking" recently published in the *New Statesman*. The quotation that follows is taken from the concluding article published on November 27th.

"The period when a Socialist programme consisted of a list of Bills to be passed by Parliament is closed. In the next five years, the function of Parliament will be primarily to watch over the administration of the Socialist plan and concern itself with measures either to amend existing schemes of nationalization or to remove anomalies in the social services. There will be a vast amount of "tidying-up" to do, including such items as Equal Pay, increased children's allowances, and old age pensions, as well as the overhaul of the Public Corporations. But it will be secondary legislation."

Such is the short and sharp ending—after a bare four years—of the dream of ever-increasing plenty flowing from each successive extension of Socialism.

THAT nationalization would fail was obvious to all serious students of our economy. If it could succeed anywhere, it could never so in a country steeped in liberal traditions, extremely impatient of centralization and wholly dependent on the export trade. Few, however, would have expected to see the vaunted panacea—the theme of every left wing peroration for over fifty years—thrown overboard after less than four years of office and while one major nationalization project is still on its way to the statute book. Yet that is what has happened and we now have a government in power, which is anxious to return to power for a further five years, without any policy directed to restoring our economy, yet dependent on the suffrages of some millions of people who have been deliberately led to believe not only that Socialism, and nothing else, could bridge the gap between what they have got and what they would like to have, but also that the much larger incomes they already enjoy are the secure first fruits of a policy which has, in fact, failed so completely that it has already been thrown overboard.

“Consolidation,” says Mr. Herbert Morrison, will be the keynote of the Socialist party’s policy in the next parliament. Admittedly it is a better policy than Socialism but what, pray is to be consolidated? The Government’s four-year plan for closing the gap between exports and imports by the time Marshall Aid comes to an end is a series of assertions, none of which can come true unless world food prices fall, our production increases, our production costs fall and military expenditure does not increase. How can these immense improvements in our economic position be achieved when people are being systematically led to believe that life is already easy, simple and secure, when the real cost of the national economy of everything they consume (except drink and tobacco) is deliberately concealed from them.

Full employment is the natural consequence of the world shortage of capital and consumer goods after the vast destruction of the five years’ war, on the one hand, and the concentration of productive efforts, all over the world, during the same five years on the war effort. Full employment at high wages is due, first and foremost, as far as this country is concerned, to the generosity of the government of the United States which first wrote off the immense balance owing on lend-lease account, then gave us a large loan, and finally came to our assistance with Marshall Aid. Our people are being told, on the contrary, that full employment at high wages—to say nothing of shorter hours—is the direct consequence of Socialism as introduced by Mr. Attlee’s Government. The issue of the next election depends, to put it bluntly, on whether the electorate believe this lie or whether they do not. The answer to this question will also determine the success of the four-year plan balancing our external trade by the time Marshall Aid comes to an end in 1952.

WE are fully capable of restoring our economy within this four-year period but only if the need for lower production costs is genuinely realized. Once it is, we shall see, on the one hand, an end of restrictive practices by the Trade Unions and, on the other, an end of the reckless taxation of the reserves of industrial enterprise, always provided that these reserves are earmarked for the

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renewal, development or modernization of plant and premises. It is the determination of the present Government not to tell the people the truth which leads them into ever increasing expenditure to keep down food prices, to extend social service benefits and to meet the immense but still concealed cost of nationalization. It is these policies, in turn, which keep taxation at a level incompatible with the effective restoration of our industrial efficiency. As a consequence, we are drifting into a very dangerous financial position just at a time when the world situation has deteriorated so far that substantial military expenditure can no longer be postponed. Here again the people of this country are being kept almost completely in the dark.

THE drain on the resources of North America has been immeasurably increased by the collapse of the Chinese Government. Whether it be true or no that the Chinese Communists are actually led by a Russian marshal, their victory further upsets the world balance of forces and is likely to place Russia in effective control of the immense natural resources of China. British and American interests must be directly affected, and the restoration of the Japanese economy, to say nothing of her military power, may well become as urgent a consideration at Washington as the restoration of Western Europe. It was probable before, it is certain now, that the main burden of defending Western Europe will fall on Western Europe itself. British public opinion is totally unprepared for this. The European Socialist parties, indeed, felt that the very week which saw the decisive Communist victories in China was the golden moment for hurling a fresh series of insults at the Spanish Government and for assuring the Spanish people that the overthrow of their regime was the only condition on which they could be restored to fellowship with their neighbours. Since the only people in Spain who wish to overthrow the present regime *at the present moment* are the friends of Russia, who fought the Civil War in alliance with Russia, lunacy could not go further. This folly is, moreover, a further blow against the restoration of a constitutional monarchy, which the majority of Spaniards, including General Franco, recognize as the ultimate solution of Spanish problems. Every attack on General Franco from outside rallies to the support of his regime that moderate Spanish opinion which is otherwise increasingly monarchist and constitutional in outlook.

THE restoration of the original eighteen months as the length of service for British conscripts is no solution of our defence problems, and no contribution to the defence of Europe, which needs an army in being. We are still thinking, it would seem, in terms of 1914, when we could rely on France to give us a year or more in which to train and equip a continental army. The more men we have under training the fewer trained soldiers are available for service in mobile formations. Our problem is not to add to our available reserves: it is to provide a relatively small quantity of highly trained and fully equipped troops available for immediate service in any part of the world. As Mr. Boyd-Carpenter pointed out in

our December number, we have immense potential reserves; all that is needed is to make arrangements for their call-up and equipment in an emergency. As Sir Giffard Martel points out in this number of the *Review*, our immediate obligation is to provide our share of that force of eighteen or twenty divisions which Europe needs for her immediate defence. For this purpose we need half the numbers we have at present under arms but we need them on a long service basis.

IT is difficult to guess whether the failure of the Government to appreciate this necessity is due to a false strategical conception or to a refusal to face as a reality the danger of Russian military aggression. The French clearly fear that the British and Americans plan, in the event of a shooting war, allows for nothing more than a delaying action on the Continent and one fought, moreover, mainly with French troops, while large scale armies are mobilized and trained for a second invasion of Europe from Africa and Great Britain. It is not conceivable that they are right, but equally inconceivable how, if they are wrong, our Government can defend their present military policy. It is obvious to a child of six that if the Western Allies allowed an almost unopposed Russian advance to Rome on the one hand and to the Channel ports on the other, Britain could not serve as a base for any subsequent invasion. Modern self-propelled weapons negate any such possibility. Further, the political consequences of such a strategy must be disastrous. Finally, the atom bomb itself will become a liability instead of an asset if it had to be used against Russian political and military headquarters in Rome and Paris and against the industrial towns and parts of France, Belgium and Holland. In other words, the only possible preparation for the shooting war is a victory in the cold war and for that an army in being is essential.

The first task of the Conservative party to-day is to call the country's attention to the scandalous neglect by H.M. Government of the country's defences. There will be no fourth world war. Please God, there will be no third world war, but if the folly and arrogance of men leads us into another conflict it will certainly be decisive, and the decision will be swift. Next time, there will be no possibility of recovery if we lose the first round and allow a hostile military power to dominate the narrow seas.

MEANWHILE a new and serious threat to our liberties at home is being prepared. There are clear indications that the Socialist party will adopt as one of the main planks in their platform at the next election the abolition of the private schools. This attack is dangerous. Here we have the first definitely Communist measure suggested for adoption by the nominally anti-Communist Labour party. The purpose behind the campaign against the private schools is quite openly admitted. Schools which cater for the children of the more highly endowed intellectually are able to charge fees (because the higher natural endowments of the parents have placed most of them in the higher income groups) and thus to get better teachers, while at the same time they can provide a far higher standard of education because of the higher general standard

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of the pupils. It is, of course, quite untrue that the teacher creates the higher standard: it is also quite untrue that the higher salaries and more attractive life offered by the private schools and their staffs create the higher standard in the teaching. Teaching is a vocation and the number of really good teachers is at least as limited as the number of really good writers, artists or surgeons. It is also impossible for any teacher, however gifted, to get the optimum results except out of classes the members of which are fairly equally endowed intellectually. It follows that if a really high intellectual standard is to be fostered, the best teachers must be concentrated on the best pupils and the best pupils must, for this purpose, be brought together in a limited number of schools. Boys and girls of scholarship standard, for instance, can take the school certificate or its equivalent at fourteen *plus*. The majority cannot take it before sixteen. The cleverer boys and girls can, therefore, acquire, nearly two years earlier than the majority, the necessary background knowledge needed as a prelude to specialization or, more accurately, higher education. This in turn enables the universities to maintain a high standard for their entrance scholarships and in their honours schools.

IT is for these clear and simple reasons that all progressive educationalists have long seen and accepted the necessity for the "educational ladder"—for ensuring, that is, that by means of scholarships and maintenance grants places shall be available in the best schools for all children of every class and every income group who can profit by the higher education there provided. We thus have a system which provides, firstly, for the natural right of the parent to give their children the best education of the kind they themselves choose and which they can afford, and which, secondly, allows an opportunity to all children of the requisite intellectual endowment to have the best education even if their parents cannot themselves afford to pay for it. In that way the claims of social justice are met without impairing the efficiency of our higher education or lowering its standards.

The Socialist aim is widely different. It is to close the private schools and to deny the right of parents willing to pay for their children's education to do so and to lower the national educational standards in the interests of what is called social equality. The first step is already proposed, viz. to forbid any children educated under the national system to take the school certificate before the age when the least gifted can take it—viz. 16. The second step, now being urged on the Socialist party by the fellow travellers and their friends in the Cabinet, is to nationalize the private schools so that no child in the country shall be able to begin serious education until he is well over 16. In this way the educational standard of the universities will be so greatly lowered that vastly increased numbers will be able to qualify for what will in fact cease to be, but by a polite fiction will still be called, university education. And thus once more the passion for equality will make vain the hope of progress. No great nation can allow its rulers, its teachers, its scientists and its technicians to be educated to any standard below the highest.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

BY D. R. DAVIES

MR. MILTON HAYES once said that Darwin had told us where we had come from and Sir Oliver Lodge had informed us where we were going. "Won't somebody tell us where we are?" A very pertinent request indeed, and far more urgent at the threshold of 1949 than when Mr. Hayes asked the question in the early twenties. The question conceals the simple but fundamental fact that a philosophy of life and politics is absolutely decisive for policy. How can we know where we are or where we are going without reference to fixed principle, to ultimates that altogether transcend historic change? Nobody contests the truth of this statement in the sphere of physical navigation. But in the sphere of social and political navigation, its truth is just as real, and even more vital, as the tragedy that has overtaken Europe so unmistakably shows. Philosophy is merely a Greek way of saying that "things are what they are and consequences will be what they will be". The political situation in Britain today is the consequence of the assumption that things are not what they are; that the nature of things—ultimate reality—is what human beings fondly wish it to be. Kipling, whose wisdom is belatedly beginning to be suspected, summed it all up a long time ago.*

"With the Hopes that our World is built on they were utterly out of touch,
They denied that the moon was Stilton; they denied she was even Dutch.
They denied that Wishes were Horses; they denied that a Pig had Wings.
So we worshipped the Gods of the Market who promised these beautiful things.
In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abundance for all,
By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul;
But, though we had plenty of money, there was nothing our money could buy,
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: 'if you don't work you die';
As it will be in the future, it was at the birth of Man—
There are only four things certain since Social Progress began:—

That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to her Mire;
And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wobbling back to the Fire;
And after this is accomplished and the brave new world begins
When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay for his sins,
As surely as water will wet us, as surely as fire will burn,
The Gods of the Copybook Headings with terror and slaughter return."

Our situation at this moment can be put in a sentence as—the vengeance of the Gods of the Copybook Headings. Outraged reality is visibly asserting itself in accumulating economic difficulties, in mounting political insecurity and widespread social frustration.

SOME recent happenings suggest that the Government is reluctantly and half-heartedly beginning to realize that the correspondence between Socialist propaganda and what I have called "the nature of things", the reality of common daily human nature, is far from being perfect. With the approach of the General Election, Mr. Morgan Phillips, secretary of the Labour party, has issued orders to Labour M.P.s and candidates about what they are *not* to promise. Gone are those halcyon days when Labour candidates, still wrapt in delusive dreams, could promise the moon, which, of course, was made of Stilton. Well, indeed, can I imagine the angry discussions of the Party moguls behind closed doors, in which the grim realities could no longer be escaped. Under no circumstances must the moon be promised any more. Absolutely not! The orders are that there must be no promises of (1) increased pensions, (2) reduced taxation, (3) the ending of Partition in Ireland. Grave and grim must be the situation that could wrench such unpalatable decisions out of a party to which the sky—and not human nature—was the limit. They register, at the least, the beginning of a painful process of disillusionment. What! No increased pensions? But what about the pensioners' votes?

* *The Gods of the Copybook Headings.*

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

And how will Mr. Maurice Webb explain to those Bradford housewives, whose budgets he has examined with such care? It is a nasty predicament in which to place well-meaning but ignorant idealists.

The Socialists are reaping the fruits of a false philosophy of politics and human nature, which has been the inspiration of their mass propaganda for fifty years—a propaganda that ignored human nature. Chesterton used to say that silly examples were always simpler. Let me give one in a form of a story, which perfectly illustrates the whole theme. A Labour candidate in a northern constituency once indulged in a glowing description of the Socialist state. The grass would always be green, the cows' udders would always be full, etc., etc. (He was an Irishman.) At the end of his speech, he was asked a question: "Under Socialism, will pigeons lay duck eggs?" "Why not?" said the candidate, "only last month a Labour member of Parliament laid a foundation stone". Precisely. The only flaw in that is that you can't eat foundation stones. But even the foundation stones are in short supply now, and Mr. Bevan's verbal substitutes are not structures which people can inhabit, as thousands of people who voted Labour in 1945 are bitterly discovering.

SOcialist propaganda has made the fatal error of dismissing limitations of human nature as mere capitalist defects, the removal of which, however, does not affect the inadequacy of human nature by one iota. The radical self-will of mankind persists under any and every form of social institutions. To quote Kipling once more, every man must pay for his sins whatever the social system. One of the concrete consequences of imagining that sin is a capitalist contradiction is a financial disparity of £300,000,000 between what the nation consumes and produces. One of the ironies of the situation is that a Socialist Government has to depend on the capitalism that it despises to slow down the rate of social collapse, not only on American capitalism but British capitalism as well. Without the contribution that the privately-owned sector of British industry

is making to the export-drive, the economic collapse of Britain would be complete. Every one of the nationalized industries is, so far, consuming more than it produces. No amount of sentimental idealism can rid this process of its grim element of disaster, which, for the time being, is being held off by the fact that privately-controlled industry is producing more than it consumes. To this process, however, there's a limit—and that limit is not the sky. It has come so near, that even a Socialist government has been compelled to glimpse it.

The significance of this belated but still most reluctant Socialist awakening is exactly that a philosophy of politics—realization of the nature of things—is the finally decisive factor in politics. Philosophical confusion, vagueness or indifference—especially indifference—will not be compensated by a programme, however pat or cut-and-dried. Programmes, at least in the sense of immediate policy, are a necessity, but they must reflect a crystal-clear understanding of the ultimate realities that govern social life. It is depressing that such a platitude has to be asserted and re-asserted at this time of day, when we are suffering such ghastly consequences of forgetting it. But it would seem that the Edmonton by-election makes repetition still necessary. The disquieting symptom about that election was that it was fought on a material level, on programme minus philosophy. The Conservative campaign was fought chiefly on the question of the material amenities. It is idiotic that Conservative electoral propaganda should concern itself so largely with loaves and fishes, when a Socialist government should, however feebly, be showing the first faint signs of realizing weightier political priorities. It seems to me to be beyond question that the materialist obsessions of the masses must be politically combated. They are the product of a false and vicious philosophy of life, to which the Socialist propaganda of two generations has made so large a contribution. But Conservatism is not going to combat this obsession by fighting its campaigns on the materialist level. By all means let Socialist failure be castigated right and left, but relate the failure to its non-material,

though still materialist, philosophy of politics. Every election should be utilized by the Conservative party, not only to criticize and defeat the Government, but to initiate the moral and political re-education of the masses in the realities which finally govern all politics. This means clarity in fundamentals.

THIS re-education of the masses (and indeed of the classes) has become an immediate political necessity in order to dethrone the gospel of material consumption. The whole crisis of our era, of which the two world-wars are a subordinate aspect, has uncovered a strange paradox, namely, that a civilization which makes ever-expanding wants and their fulfilment a first aim of existence involves itself in the contradiction of declining productive resources. It is pursuing a mirage, if only because the higher material standards of consumption that it may succeed in achieving will give less satisfaction than the standards it has surpassed. Psychology has become a primary factor in modern economics. If the purpose of a higher standard of living is to yield greater satisfaction, but in the actual event yields less satisfaction, then the whole process is nullified. The ensuing dissatisfaction creates a new insecurity. This is the plight we are in to-day. It cannot be more truthfully described than in the words of Holy Scripture. "We looked for light, but behold darkness; for brightness, but we walk in obscurity."

The psychology which experiences progressively less and less satisfaction in the objectively higher and higher material standards is the product of regarding material consumption as the primary aim of existence. It is surely obvious that the persistence of that mentality will mean the end of the Conservative party and everything it stands for, because Conservatism cannot pretend to satisfy it. No political movement or 'ism can, in actual fact, satisfy it. Socialism has hitherto been under the delusion that it could satisfy it. But Conservatism cannot even pretend to cater for such a mentality. Now that the Socialists (some of them) are beginning to have doubts about it,

only the Communists can pretend to undertake the fulfilment of impossibilities; for there is no falsehood or degradation that Communism will not employ for the sake of power. The persistence of the mass mentality, which makes material consumption primary, will inevitably mean, in the conditions of our contemporary Western crisis, the triumph of Communism. Communism is the final fruit of the idea of the primacy of material consumption. Nothing can prevent the victory of Communism in the long run (which won't be so very long), if the masses of industrialized society continue to believe that expanding material consumption and "the good life" are one and the same thing. Nothing! Not all the military power which America and Western Europe may mobilize can defeat Communism, so long as the primacy of material wants continues to obsess society.

SINCE the beginning of the twentieth century, Socialist propaganda has traded in impossibilities, which, to the materialist delusions of the masses, seemed credible. It was precisely mass belief in the impossible that gave the Labour party their huge majority in 1945. Socialists promised a brave new world in which the people would work less and have more to consume; in which they would have larger and better houses for lower and lower rents; in which life would be more and more planned and people would please themselves more and more; in which cheap abundance of goods and services would be combined with ever-extending leisure; in which international security would increase with decline of armaments. Life was to be one long summer picnic between the cradle and the grave. Mr. John Strachey even toyed with the idea of removing the grave to the Greek Kalends.* The only thing that was necessary to realize this Golden Eldorado was a Socialist majority to legislate "the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange", and the rest would follow. Oh

* *Vide his Literature and Dialectical Materialism*, p. 41. "Death might be indefinitely postponed." (It is but poetic justice that Mr. Strachey should be burdened with the task of saving us from a premature grave by means of Iceland stakes and snoek.)

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

blessed slogan! That saved us the weariness of thinking. Seek ye first a Socialist majority and all the rest shall be added unto you.

That ballyhoo is officially finished as far as the Labour party is concerned—at least for the next election. But this is where the Communists come in—to the left of the Left. At the behest of Moscow, which cannot provide even fish and chips for its wretched millions, the Communists will take up the tale where the Labour party, temporarily and officially, leaves off. They will promise everything, including permanent summer, to the masses. Are we still so drugged as to repeat “it can’t happen here”? Communism has already come to power in half of Europe and more than half of Asia precisely by promising everything to everybody. Is it not lunacy to be complacent about the other half of Europe? We had better wake up; for, as the Chinese proverb puts it, “it is much later than you think”. The only finally certain guarantee that the Communist (and fellow-traveller inside the Labour party) propaganda of impossibilities will be defeated is that the electorate shall cease to believe in the primacy of material consumption. To a society that knows that the good life is not identical with ever-expanding wants, Communism will make no appeal whatever. Its propaganda will explode like a damp squib. And it is here surely that the Conservative party comes in—at the right of political truth and reality—i.e. of policy that reflects the nature of things.

IT is with great deliberation, and only after considerable reflection, that I conclude that political re-education of the people must be regarded by the Conservative party as a task of the first order. If the Conservative party will not shoulder this burden—for burden it will indeed be—no other political agency will do it. Events, however calamitous, will certainly not do it. They can only disillusion, embitter and frustrate, which means that, without interpretation, the nation will fall victim to still deeper delusion, like the Communist, for instance. Neither can the Labour party be looked to for salvation *viz.* re-education. It is too riven with ideological inconsistency;

too confused about fundamentals. Its trumpet will never give a clear sound. It cannot rise to the level of events, as its attitude to Western Union has so lamentably proved. No political party to-day, in the awful predicament in which Western civilization is enmeshed, which thinks primarily in terms of party is fit to be entrusted with responsibility. Its party obsessions and petty interests have distorted the Labour party's vision of Europe, in which the Socialism of its (Labour party's) dreams has proved to be but “a reed shaken in the wind” and will soon be “gone with the wind”. A party that reduces Europe to party interests is most assuredly not going to re-educate its own people. What moral strength there is in Western Europe to-day, and still more in Eastern Europe, lies in the Catholic Church—a fact to which the secularist pre-possessions of the Labour party blind it completely. It is the Christian Democrats who are reviving Europe. The plain recognition of this fact has become an acid test of political intelligence and competence in the prevailing conditions. It is by that test that the Labour party most clearly demonstrates its utter inadequacy for the defence of democracy.

Besides these weighty considerations, however, there are others only less weighty, though more comic. If Western civilization itself were not at stake, one could relax in satirical enjoyment at the spectacle of the Labour party, a veritable “sorcerer's apprentice”, desperately trying to overcome the consequences of its own propaganda. Mr. Morgan Phillips' instructions are one part of that Herculean effort. It is much too early, however, to interpret this effort as a sign of genuine repentance, as a sign that the Socialists—I mean the leaders—have undergone any real change of mind about political realities. They have always been too eager to believe that salvation lies just around the corner on the road they are travelling. The echoes of the song in Mr. Dalton's heart still reverberate in our ears. It is now so plain that salvation can only be sought on a road vastly different from the one on which the Government has been reeling from side to side. I would define an optimist as a

man who believes that the Labour party will travel a new road, except when events push it there—i.e. when it would be too late.

THE Labour party is a conglomeration of men whose fundamental beliefs—philosophy in another word—are wholly incompatible. How then can it re-educate anybody, leave alone the British people? How can political re-education be entrusted to a party in whose ranks pacifists and Communists (concealed) jostle one another, in which out-and-out secularists and Christians lie down together? The fatal significance of this fact can be denied only by those who contend that what men believe about ultimate realities does not matter, which is what modern society kept on repeating with such lunatic levity—until men who had completely abandoned Christian doctrine started experiments on human beings and massacred them in gas-ovens. The divergence in fundamentals that characterizes the Labour party disqualifies it when politics are narrowed down to the one supreme issue of the Either . . . Or of secularism and Christianity—either the fundamental evaluation of life and man of secularism or that of the Western, Christian tradition. Make no mistake about it—this and nothing less is the issue now emerging in world politics.

The political re-education of the British people. Here is the gigantic task that the sombre development of the time is offering to the Conservative party. Its very existence—and much more—depends on the faithful, assiduous discharge of this grave obligation to history. In a socialized Britain, the Conservative party would decay and die—and so would the British people, too. Conservatism is a necessary expression of British civilization, a simple fact which the ingrained leftarian has yet to learn. But he has such a lot to learn, amongst other things that the forty-five million people of our land will not be able to sustain physical existence by taking in one another's washing. Even Cabinet Ministers (e.g. Mr. Bevan and Mr. Strachey) have only learnt it in the last few years. But we cannot all be educated by Cabinet office. Hence the Conservative

party must undertake the task of education—of education and not mere propaganda.

THE crisis of Europe presents the party with an immediate opportunity to do so, and this may be a blessing in disguise. It was through a crippling misfortune, it seems, that Mr. Gene Tunney deprived Mr. Jack Dempsey of the heavy-weight championship of the world. Only a few months before the fight, Tunney suffered a severe shoulder accident, which incapacitated him from delivering a right-hand punch from above his chest. So he spent the months before the contest practising a right-hand punch below his chest. It was with that punch that he toppled Dempsey from his throne. "It was that blow . . . that really won the fight. It did not drop Dempsey, but it had him dazed and confused for at least seven rounds" (*vide* p. 103 of *Ringside* by Trevor Wignall). Calamity has overtaken Europe and engulfed its decent masses in a sea of suffering and, iagony. It is this same calamity, however that demonstrates most clearly, if tragically, that men cannot play tricks with the nature of things, or to be more exact, with the limitations of human nature that result from its basic egocentrism, which includes the sovereignty of morality. "Morality is the nature of things . . . why therefore should we seek to deceive ourselves?" (Bishop Butler). Foreign policy is supremely a sphere for Conservative re-education.

Foreign policy is the field in which the parties have most in common, which means that it is by means of the necessities of foreign policy that the British people can come soonest to the realization of political reality. Foreign policy directly involves national survival. When it comes to the point, nationality and its preservation transcends every other interest in the heart of the average Englishman, Scotsman and Welshman, including even the interest of social reform. But in this sense, nearly half of the Labour members of Parliament are not average, which is a just conclusion to draw from the fact that 166 Labour members either voted against the National Service Bill or abstained from voting at all. It is a conclusion also that is fortified by the

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vacillations of the Government on this vital question, which, it is now plain to see, have been due to the pressure of its recalcitrant Left minority—which is a very large minority. Hence the common ground between the Conservatives and the Socialists is really common ground between the Conservatives and little over half of the Parliamentary Socialists. This is the concrete fact, which it is a grave disservice to the nation to screen or to decorate.

UNTIL recently the Government has been living in a fool's paradise regarding foreign affairs. How else can its handling of the national defences be explained? It persisted too long in its delusion that the threat to our national security could be conjured away by ideological affinities. So in the matter of armaments it has blown tepid and cold. The blunt, stark truth of the situation now is that armed defence, whatever the cost, has priority over every other political interest, a fact of which the Conservative party, especially under the leadership of Mr. Churchill, can soon convince the British people.

Whether war with Russia can be avoided is uncertain. But one thing is certain: it will not be avoided if the democracies are militarily weak. Therefore our armed

strength must take precedence over social reform, for instance. That's one thing the Labour party will never tell the people. And they must be told it. Social reform, disbursement of more loaves and fishes, at the expense of national—nay of Western—defence, will mean social dissolution and national extinction. Air-power comes before higher wages for the masses or reduction of taxation for the classes, as a principle of policy. This theme can educate the British people in the limitations of sinful human nature more effectively than aught else. It is the point of departure in the Conservative approach to the next election. Let Kipling have the last word:

"This is the midnight—let no star
Delude us—dawn is very far.
This is the tempest long foretold—
Slow to make head but sure to hold.

Stand by! The lull twixt blast and blast
Signals the storm is near, not past;
And worst than present jeopardy
May our forlorn to-morrow be.

If we have cleared the expectant reef,
Let no man look for his relief.
Only the darkness hides the shape
Of further peril to escape.

.
But, till she fetches open sea,
Let no man deem that he is free!" *

* *The Storm Cone.*



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THE THREE HEADS OF CHARLES I.
(From the painting by Van Dyck at Windsor)

KING CHARLES I: A REVALUATION

By CHARLES PETRIE

THREE hundred years ago, on 30th January, 1649, Charles I was executed outside the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, after having observed to the Bishop of London only a few minutes earlier, "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where there will be no more trouble". So died "this virtuous and able monarch", to quote Disraeli, and the Conservative statesman went on to say of the execution, "Never yet did man lay down his heroic life for so great a cause: the cause of the Church

and the cause of the Poor". On the tercentenary of this event it is not unimportant to see what manner of man this was who met so tragic a death, and also why he met it.

Charles has been extravagantly praised by some writers, and as immoderately abused by others, but in the vast majority of cases the authors in question have been content to treat him as the personification of a principle, namely the Divine Right of Kings. The result has been that he passes through the pages of the average history-

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book either as a tyrant or a martyr, but always as somewhat colourless. It is admittedly not so easy to understand Charles I as his son, but that is no reason for not making the attempt.

WHAT is too often forgotten is that for the first twelve years of his life Charles had no expectation of succeeding to the throne, and that he was completely overshadowed by his masterful and popular elder brother, Henry. As a rule the Stuarts matured early (Prince Charles Edward is a notable example of this), but Charles I was an exception. Even when he became King he was not only a young man—he was twenty-four—but young for his age. The influence which Henry had wielded over him was then exercised by Buckingham, and this remained the case until the duke's death. This dependence was in no way extraordinary, for Buckingham had been his father's minister since Charles was little more than a boy, and whatever his faults he was just the type of man, full of worldly wisdom and only eight years older than the King, upon whom the somewhat diffident Charles would naturally come to rely. The letters which Charles and Buckingham wrote to James I from Madrid are evidence of their relationship while the young man was still Prince of Wales, and his later ones, after he became King, tell the same story. Incidentally, Charles is never again found writing to a subject, not even to Strafford, in the same strain that he did to "Steenie".

The effects of this dependence, first upon Henry and then upon Buckingham, were never wholly eradicated. The chief defect of Charles as a ruler was a fatal irresolution and a lack of self-confidence. Gardiner, the historian, treated the King as a stupid man, but this was not the opinion of his contemporaries. Clarendon wrote that "he had an excellent understanding, but was not confident enough of it; which made him oftentimes change his own opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of a man that did not judge so well as himself". His opponent, Oliver St. John, held much the same view, and Cromwell went so far as to say that if Charles had trusted his own judgment he

would have fooled them all. It was the same during the Civil War. "He was very fearless in his person", said Clarendon, "but not enterprising."

Yet, strangely enough, in that last scene of all, before his judges in Westminster Hall, his diffidence, like his stammer, completely deserted him. Years before, when he had been forced to abandon Oxford to his enemies, he had written to Digby, "If I cannot live as a King, I shall die like a gentleman, without doing that which may make honest men blush for me". That promise was nobly fulfilled.

THAT Charles was a great gentleman cannot seriously be disputed. None other would have sent his own chaplain to the deathbed of John Hampden, mortally wounded on Chalgrove field, or have sent instructions to the Mayor of Newbury to collect "all the sick and hurt soldiers of the Earl of Essex's army; and though they be rebels, and deserve the punishment of traitors, yet out of our tender compassion upon them as being our subjects, our will and pleasure is, that you carefully provide for their recovery, as well as for those of our own army".

To appreciate the attitude of Charles it must be remembered that the Thirty Years' War was being fought in contemporary Germany, where burning-masters appeared among the regular officers of the armies. Nor was he influenced by the example of his opponents, who slaughtered without hesitation all the Irish women found in the Royalist camp after Naseby, and disfigured their English sisters by cutting open their faces.

AS might have been expected of such a monarch, his court had a definite influence upon the progress of civilization in England. Its refinement was in marked contrast not only with the boorishness of James I and his courtiers, but even with what must be termed the grossness of the Tudor period. The gradual spread of real refinement, as opposed to a superficial chivalry, dates from the accession of Charles. It is not improbable that to some extent the

cultured atmosphere of Whitehall tended to separate the King from the mass of the country gentlemen, who still followed the ruder ways of their forefathers. When the Civil War came Parliament started selling the collection of pictures which Buckingham had formed, and ordered that those which contained representations of Christ or the Virgin Mary should be burnt. Such actions are eloquent of a fundamental philistinism which probably had its counterpart in a slight contempt in the mind of the King.

In any event Charles was always happier with things than with men, and the artist in him may well have despised the long-winded and uncultured squires and burgesses who took themselves so seriously at Westminster. He became dangerously isolated, and that both politically and intellectually. Yet the improvement he wrought in English manners survived him, and neither the coarseness of the Protectorate nor the frivolity of the Restoration caused a set-back. With the possible exception of Richard II, whom in some ways he resembled, Charles was the first gentleman, in the best sense of that much-abused word, to sit on the English throne.

HALF Englishman and half Scot, it was the irony of fate that made Charles an Englishman at Holyrood and a Scot at Westminster. To say that he never understood the English people would be an exaggeration, but he certainly underestimated his enemies. Unfortunately he was not helped in this matter by his wife. England has not been very happy in its French Queens, and Henrietta Maria was no exception. She never could understand why her husband placed the Church before his own life, and she came to despise him for what she considered his weakness. From contempt to infidelity is a short step, and the *liaison* between Henrietta Maria and Harry Jermyn may have begun even before the King's death.

In many ways Charles was his own worst enemy. As one of his recent biographers has put it, "He was incapable of working up crowd emotion in his own favour. He could only state the issues as he saw them, not as

they might appear to the average man, which is the secret of successful propaganda". Apart, too, from the religious issues involved, neither the King nor his opponents fully grasped what was the real cause of their difference. The value of money was steadily falling, and the price of wheat—a sure index—rose 250 per cent between 1570 and 1648. It had become impossible for the King to live on his own resources. Parliament could not understand what was taking place, and it became increasingly suspicious of the Crown when it found that the money it voted was never enough to carry on the administration of the country, let alone to maintain British prestige abroad.

THIS, however, was not all, for the rich landowners and burghers who filled the House of Commons wanted glory without having to pay for it, and Hampden achieved immortality for his championship of this point of view. He refused to pay Ship Money on the ground that there was "no immediate danger". Of course there was no immediate danger in Buckinghamshire, but the mouths of the Thames and the Severn were infested with pirates, while in five years 266 ships were taken from English harbours, and their crews sold in slavery. That in the vast majority of his actions the King had both precedent and common sense on his side can hardly be denied, and his justification for the dissolution of Parliament in 1629 is a masterpiece of close reasoning. Had Charles been the innovator the Whig writers would have us believe, his methods would have been very different, and probably far more successful.

Parliament, in effect, represented the rich, who made the laws at Westminster, and administered them on the bench in the country. They would have been more than human had they not looked to their own interests in these circumstances, and they proved to be very human indeed. James I had fully appreciated this, and when there had been rioting in the Midlands over enclosures he sent a Commission down to investigate, and warned the members to see that the poor were not impoverished by the encroachments of the rich. The House of Commons did

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not like this, nor did it like the great Prerogative Courts, such as the Star Chamber and the Council of the North, which stood between the rich and complete control of the machinery of justice. Yet a modern historian has said of the eleven years of the personal government of Charles that they were characterized by "increasing efficiency in administration", and that "the interests of the wage-earning classes were never so carefully watched," while the disappearance of the Prerogative Courts "was much to be regretted".

THE late Lord Henry Bentinck, M.P. declared that "if Charles was a poor constitutionalist, he was a good social reformer", and that he "was as one born out of due time", though not all of us would be prepared to agree that the King "should have been a member of a Labour Government". However this may be, the memory of what the Crown was able to do for the poor before its powers were curtailed by the rich goes a long way towards explaining that continued devotion of the masses to the Stuarts which was to be so prominent a feature of Jacobitism. More than a century after Charles I had been beheaded, and sixty-two years after his son had lost the throne, strikers at Newcastle-on-Tyne proclaimed his great-grandson, Bonnie Prince Charlie, as Charles III.

The weak position of the King was in no small measure due to the fact that he united against him a growing body of opinion both in the Church and in the State. To some extent this was rather his misfortune than his fault. In the reign of Elizabeth, fear of the Spaniard had prevented any serious disunion among English Protestants, and in that of James I the country was too busy making money to think of much else. Before Charles had been long upon the throne both these factors had ceased to be operative, for the Continental Powers were too deeply implicated in the Thirty Years' War to have time for an invasion of the British Isles, while the squire, especially in the Eastern Counties, and the tradesmen had reached that stage of affluence that gives leisure for an active interest in politics.

CHARLES believed, like his father before him, that religion was his affair, and not the business of Parliament. So far as precedents were concerned, he was undoubtedly in the right. In 1581, for example, a Mr. Cope wished to introduce in the House of Commons a measure to reform the Church, but he was forbidden by the Speaker to continue his speech. Nor was this all, for Elizabeth sent for the Speaker, and told him that no ecclesiastical Bill was to be brought forward without her consent, while the luckless Cope was imprisoned for his temerity.

The weakness of the royal position under Charles was that the Church had become unpopular among large sections of the population, which is hardly surprising in view of its condition. The ordinary Englishman has no use for a religion whose ministers he cannot respect as men as well as in their spiritual character, and it is more than doubtful whether the majority of the Anglican clergy came within this category at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Charles was thus endeavouring to exalt a Church which was only too open to criticism, and with the demerits of which his subjects were much better acquainted than was he. Nor was this all, for he attempted to carry out his policy at a time when he was, wholly unjustifiably, suspected of a partiality towards Roman Catholicism. The foolish behaviour of the Queen, especially her refusal to be crowned with her husband, contributed not a little to this suspicion, which was deepened by the King's efforts to restore some of the ritual and practices that had lapsed at the Reformation.

TO understand the attitude of Charles and his opponents it must be realized that no one had yet conceived as possible the idea of more than one Church. To-day if a man finds the Anglican service too High or too Low for his taste he is at perfect liberty to attend a Nonconformist or Roman Catholic place of worship. In those days he had no such choice. The aim of everyone was to make the Church of England what he thought a Church should be. When, therefore, the King began to revive the pre-Reformation custom of placing the altar at

the east end of the church, and insisted on the clergy wearing surplices, those who did not like these things could not shrug their shoulders and go elsewhere: they had either to acquiesce, or oppose the changes.

Even so, Charles might have effected a great deal without arousing any violent antagonism had it not been for the presence of Laud by his side. Sincere as he was, Laud, like so many men remarkable for their honesty, was utterly tactless, and he roused an opposition as determined as he was himself. "Much praise to God", said Archy, the King's Court Jester, by way of Grace, "and little laud to the Devil". Such sentiments were widespread among the English people.

Bishops have never been popular in England, and the Church had not yet been persecuted, so it was not the rallying point that it became later in the century. As the Puritans were one day to find out in their turn, the English will not tolerate even the appearance of the supremacy of Church over State, and the bishops of Charles, unlike those of Elizabeth, tried to carry matters with a very high hand. Even the Royalist Falkland admitted that "whereas those that hated them hated them worse than the Devil, those that loved them did not love them so well as their dinner".

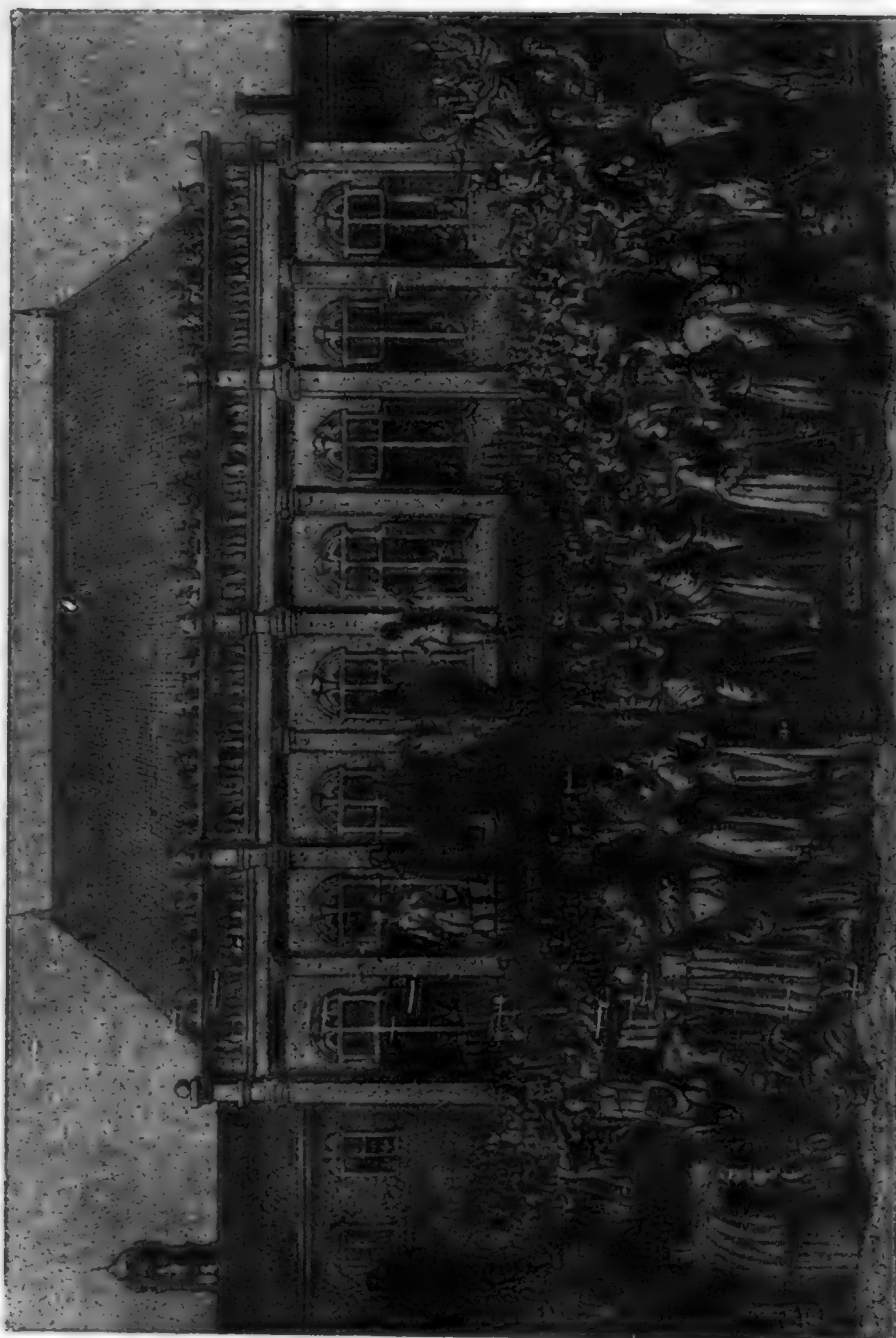
IN so far as those who opposed the King's Ecclesiastical policy did so from the dictates of conscience their attitude must be respected, but it is only too probable that in many cases religion was the excuse rather than the reason for the opposition. In that age the pulpit was the chief means of influencing public opinion, and what it could effect was seen before the end of the Stuart period in the case of Sacheverell. The more astute of those who wished to weaken the monarchy realized this, and were determined at all costs to prevent the complete control of the pulpit by Charles and Laud. In the early years of the reign these were but a handful, and it required the appearance of other, and more personal, issues to cause their numbers to increase. Such being the case, it is no matter for surprise that when both monarchy and Church had been overthrown the victors displayed no inclination

whatsoever to tolerate any difference of opinion, and where the King had used whips they employed scorpions.

Fortunately for Charles the success of his opponents in the early days of the Long Parliament tempted them to go too far. They must, too, have believed that they were more secure than ever after the revealed incompetence of the Court in trying to arrest the Five Members in the House instead of rounding them up in their beds one dark night without any fuss. No politician regretted, for reasons which have been mentioned, the disappearance of the Prerogative Courts, and very few murmured when the bishops were deprived of their seats in the House of Lords, but it was a different matter when the majority in Parliament proceeded to try to wrest the control of the militia from the Crown, and, in return for Scottish help, set about presbyterianizing the Church of England. This provided Charles with a sufficient number of adherents to fight a civil war, and although he lost both it and his life, the monarchy was saved.

WAS Charles dishonest? The record of his dealings with his opponents, and the circumstances in which they took place, must be considered before the question can be answered. The charge generally relates to the last years of his life, and it must be remembered that from the moment the King placed himself in the hands of the Scots until his death he was actually, if not always nominally, a prisoner. He had to negotiate with three separate factions, namely the Parliament, the Army, and the Scots; and while they all had force at their disposal, he had none. Furthermore, he had just been decisively beaten in a long civil war. Any man in his position who had not employed the one weapon left to him, dissimulation, would have been a fool, and Charles was assuredly not that. That he blundered badly from time to time must be admitted, but that he was any more dishonest than his enemies, and therefore worthy of censure, it is impossible in face of the evidence to maintain. The Army, the Scots, and the Parliament merely sought to use Charles for their own

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THE EXECUTION OF CHARLES I, 1649
(From a contemporary Dutch print.)

ends, as he tried to play them off against one another for his. They were more successful; that is all.

At the trial and on the scaffold the mists were finally dispersed, and the naked soul of the King became clear. During those days he was the embodiment of a principle, the old English monarchy in its defence of the rights of the common man against the usurpation of a minority, and that principle was upon its trial in his person. This was not lost upon contemporaries, and when Bradshaw used the phrase "in the name of the people of England", Lady Fairfax shouted from the gallery, "It is a lie! Where are the people and their consents?", while another woman called out, "Not half or a quarter of them. Cromwell is a traitor".

FINALLY, when sentence of death had been pronounced by this wholly illegal tribunal what was really at stake was most clearly revealed:

King: Will you hear me a word, Sir?

Lord President: Sir, you are not to be heard after the sentence.

King: No sir!

Lord President: No sir; by your favour, Sir. Guard, withdraw your prisoner.

King: I may speak after the sentence—by your favour, Sir, I may speak after the sentence ever. By your favour (Hold!) the sentence, Sir—I say, Sir, I do—I am not suffered for to speak: expect what justice other people will have.

The phrase was not forgotten during the long rule of the Saints by the sword. In the words of Lionel Johnson:

Brief life, and hapless? Nay:

Through death, life grew sublime.

Speak after sentence? Yea:

And to the end of time.

THAT was on Saturday, January 27th. The week-end was spent in obtaining signatures to the death-warrant, and after Cromwell had exercised the maximum amount of pressure fifty-nine of the judges signed. To show his satisfaction at what had been done the Lord Protector that was to be

seized the occasion for a little characteristic horse-play, and smeared the face of his co-regicide, Marten, with ink.

Two days elapsed before the sentence was carried out, and the King was magnificent to the end, fully redeeming his promise to Digby to "die like a gentleman". He took farewell of the only two of his children who still remained in England, Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester, and he wrote a long letter to the future Charles II in which he said, "It is all I have now left me, a power to forgive those that have deprived me of all".

TUESDAY, January 30th, was raw and bitter, and Charles put on two shirts in case the cold might make him shiver, thus giving the impression that he was afraid. William Juxon, the Bishop of London, was with him, and as they walked from St. James's Palace between the line of soldiers to the place of execution outside the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, the King pointed out a tree in Spring Gardens which his brother had planted forty years before. On arrival in Whitehall there was a long delay, and it was not until afternoon that the final act of the drama took place. "The blow I saw given", said an onlooker, "and can truly say, with a sad heart. At the instant whereof, I remember well, there was such a groan by the thousands there present as I never heard before, and desire I may never hear again". At once two troops of horse rode forward to clear the streets of the sovereign people of England in whose name murder had just been committed.

So died one who, to quote Clarendon once more, "was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian, that the age in which he lived produced. And if he were not the best King, if he were without some parts and qualities which have made some Kings great and happy, no other prince was ever unhappy who was possessed of half his virtues and endowments, and so much without any kind of vice".

Short Story

THE TOP OF THE TREE

By ROSALIND CONSTABLE

MARIAN NAISMITH came out of the Park Lane Hotel into a picture-postcard Christmas Eve. A fresh blanket of snow lay over sidewalk and street, and only a few footfalls and marks of tires spoiled the clean perfection. Walking behind a pair of enormous footprints, Marian thought for a moment how seldom, in this impersonal city, a man left his mark so clearly. She was feeling a little high.

A trifle unsteadily, she walked northward up Park Avenue. It's going to be an off-white Christmas, she said happily to herself, pausing to look into the tiny glittering window of a jeweller. Now that she was on her way home she began to wonder precisely why she had left the party before it was all over. She studied a cabochon emerald and felt a little wistful. It's just because I'm so damn sick of the repetition, she thought.

Every year the firm for which she worked, an oil company, gave a shindig, sparing no expense, at one or another of the smart hotels. She had been with the firm for ten years, starting as typist and ending up as a senior secretary. Consequently she had been to ten office parties, and their pattern was by now pretty familiar: the same girls got tight and told off a big shot, the same big shots got tight and kissed the girls. She never did anything news-worthy, never backed an executive into a corner to tell him the story of her life, never had a crying jag or fell on her face. But she had always been one of the good sports that some of the higher-ups liked to gather up at the very end and take to dinner at some small French restaurant. This was the one night of the year when they could return to their suburban homes around midnight a little the worse for wear, she supposed, but with the clear conscience of men who know they have only been doing their duty.

I guess I must be getting old, she thought, turning away from the jeweller's window and starting to plod along. There had been a time

when she had attended these parties with a pleasant tingle of anticipation. Anything might happen. Now she was sure nothing ever would. And then she remembered that Bill was to call her at home around eight. By a not-very-odd coincidence Bill's office was also having a party—nothing splashy, just rye out of Lily cups in the president's office. She had told Bill she might not be home, but he said he would call anyway. It was quite possible that Bill would get stewed and forget, since he was well aware that if she found anything better to do she would not hesitate to stand him up. He was just a young man she kept in reserve, for a rainy day. Or a snowy night, she all at once added. And, having glanced at her watch and seen that it was almost eight, she started to walk a little faster.

Suddenly she became aware that someone was walking softly behind her, close enough to make her slightly uneasy and unable to turn around. Then a hand grabbed her arm.

"Going my way?" said a genial voice.

She looked up into the handsome face of Sebastian Sherman, vice-president, in charge of public relations, easily the most aloof big shot in the firm, whom she had always supposed only attended the party from a sense of *noblesse oblige*.

"Why, Mr. Sherman," said Marian.

Mr. Sherman had gathered her up by one arm and did not slacken his pace, simply accelerated hers. For a fleeting moment she had the impression that she was being dragged through the snow by her hair.

"I've been following you," he said cheerily, "and I've been wondering why a pretty girl like you should leave the party so early. Must be something wrong with the party is the way I figure it. Now what I want to know is . . ."

While he was talking Mr. Sherman had propelled her through a revolving door into a small, dark bar. Still holding firmly to her arm, Mr. Sherman steered her to the darkest

corner. A waiter rose out of the gloom to take Mr. Sherman's order for two Scotches, and a hat-check girl came to remove his fur-lined coat. Smoothing his thick white hair with both hands he sat down opposite Marian flashing her a white smile. With his burning black eyes and ruddy complexion he was really very handsome, thought Marian.

"Now let's get this straight," said Mr. Sherman, still cheery, but obviously having forgotten what he had been talking about. When the waiter brought the drinks they both watched him attentively as he poured the contents of the little glasses into bigger glasses, deftly opened and poured the soda water with one hand. The ritual accomplished, they both raised their glasses.

"Listen," said Mr. Sherman, after a moment's awkward silence, "you've got to tell me your name again. Stupid of me . . ."

"Marian. Marian Naismith."

"Of course," he said. "And you——"

"I'm secretary to Mr. Portland," said Marian.

"That jerk," said Mr. Sherman.

"Mr. Portland is a very nice man," said Marian primly, registering the fascinating news of a feud.

"You in love with him?" asked Mr. Sherman, looking knowing.

"Heavens, no," laughed Marian. "You got me confused with Marie Brewster."

"That blonde that works for Ray Parsons? Is she in love with him?"

"Is she in love with him? You know that girl is so crazy-mad for Mr. Parsons she turned down a very nice man in the insurance business because he wanted her to quit her job?"

"That so? Now what's Ray got that I haven't got? My secretary isn't in love with me—or is she?"

"I guess it's just that you're a little stand-offish," said Marian, at the precise moment that Mr. Sherman leaned heavily across the table and covered her hand with one large well-manicured paw.

"D'you think I'm stand-offish?" he asked

"Well, no, not exactly." Marian giggled.

"Has it ever occurred to you I might be lonely?"

"No", said Marian, "but now you mention it I can see how it could be".

"It can be very lonely at the top of the tree", said Mr. Sherman. And there was just a suspicion of a break in his voice. "Waiter! Same again."

"I think," said Marian hesitantly, "that if you want to be more popular there are several things you could do——"

"Popular!" said Mr. Sherman indignantly. "That's not what I'm talking about. It's just that a man in my position can be very lonely. Love my wife, you understand. Don't misunderstand me. It's just—but let's not talk about me. Let's talk about you."

Mr. Sherman picked up his fresh drink and took a long pull, then set it down.

"Let's see now," he said. "I'll guess about you. You live in Queens, with your mother and father and a kid brother. And I'll bet you helped put him through college and kept right on being the best-dressed girl in the office."

"Why, Mr. Sherman," laughed Marian, "you know quite well that Lucile Beresford is the best-dressed girl in the office. But, naturally, she can afford it."

"The receptionist? Why, she got a rich husband?"

"I didn't say anything about a husband, did I? But she's got a mink coat."

"Well, I'll be gosh darned." A dreamy look came into Mr. Sherman's dark eyes. "But you haven't answered. Was I right about the Queens setup?"

"Heavens, no. My family's in Ohio."

"Then you share an apartment with a girl friend?" Mr. Sherman persisted.

"Wrong again," laughed Marian. "As a matter of fact, I live right near here, on Fifty-fourth Street, by myself."

"Oh, *do* you?" said Mr. Sherman. "You know what, Marian? I don't know when I've had a better time. You're a real person, Marian, a sweet girl."

Again his paw came across the table and smothered her hand. At that moment the revolving door whirled and a gust of people blew in. Chattering and laughing they made for the back of the bar. Suddenly one of their number detached herself from the group and with cries of delight made for the corner

THE TOP OF THE TREE

where Marian and Mr. Sherman were sitting.

"Why, look who's here," she cried. "If it isn't Marian. I looked for you all over the ladies' room. I thought maybe you were sick or something. Now I see why you left. Here, move over a little Marian, I'll sit with you a minute. I'd like to talk to Mr. Sherman."

"Mr. Sherman?" said Mr. Sherman. "Who the hell's Mr. Sherman? My name's George Patton. I'm an insurance salesman from Toledo, Ohio, old friend of Marian's family. In town on business and thought I'd see how the little girl was making out."

Marian was disappointed and, just in case her friend Janet should be foolish enough to believe him, she winked heavily at her.

"George Patton, eh?" said Janet, winking back. "Quite a distinguished name you have there. Okay, Georgie, if that's the way you want it, it's okay with me. Maybe it's cozier that way. Why don't we all sit together?"

"Sorry," said Mr. Sherman firmly. "Got to be moving along. Waiter! Check."

"Okay, Georgie, be seeing you," said Janet amiably, and drifted back to her group, who fell silent as they watched Marian walk out, followed by a vice-president.

"Tell you what we'll do," said Mr. Sherman, when they were on the street. "Got any liquor in your place? Sherry? Hell, that's no good. Know of a liquor store around here? We'll pick up a bottle of Scotch."

Not knowing what else to say, Marian informed him there was a liquor store on her block, and once again she found herself being propelled forward at high speed. But this time the elation had left her, to be replaced by a sense of helpless bewilderment. Things, she felt dimly, were getting out of hand.

In no time at all they were climbing the three flights to her apartment. Mr. Sherman tossed his beautiful black Homburg across the room on to the sofa and hurled himself,

overcoat and all, full length into an arm-chair.

"This is a lot better than some noisy bar," he said. "How about a drink? Got any ice?"

"I have ice," said Marian tersely, picking up the bottle, "and running hot and cold water. We're quite up to date around here."

"Nice little place you've got, Marian," said Mr. Sherman, reaching out a hand and lazily slapping at Marian's rear, missing her, as she went toward the kitchenette.

At that moment the telephone rang, and putting the bottle down on the sofa Marian hurried into the bedroom to answer it. It was Bill.

"Listen, honey," he said, "don't be mad at me. But I know you aren't asleep, because I've been calling you every fifteen minutes since eight."

"Mad?" said Marian. "Why should I be mad?"

"Listen," said Bill, "I'm at the Biltmore, with the gang. Be a sport and come on down. Hell, it's the festive season."

"Why, Bill, darling, that would be lovely," said Marian. "You'll come up here right away?"

"What's that?" said Bill.

"I'll expect you right away," said Marian, loud and clear.

"You want me to come up? Honest? Gee, Marian, thanks. I'll be right over."

Marian hung up and walked slowly back into the living-room.

"That was my fiancé." She lit a cigarette with a hand that trembled slightly. "He's coming up. I'd like you to meet him."

Mr. Sherman stared at her for an instant from the depths of his chair. Then he put his hands on the arms and pushed himself to his feet. With immense dignity he crossed the room, picked up his hat, tucked the bottle under his arm and stalked toward the door. There he paused, and turned his handsome angry face toward Marian.

"You stinker," he said, and went out, slamming the door.

THE SAFETY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

BY GIFFARD MARTEL*

WHAT is the main threat to the security of the Western Nations of the world at the present time? It falls into two parts. The first main threat is that if we continue to do so little as we have done in the last few years the Russians may well extend and strengthen their grip in Europe. They will then be very well placed to launch a World War against us in about five years' time when they will possess the atom bomb as a weapon. If we take the necessary steps at once and prevent any further Russian penetration in Europe, I do not think it will lead to an immediate World War, for Russia is in no way prepared at the present time. But though she will then be less well placed to do so she will certainly continue her preparations to launch a great war against us when she is ready. This brings us to the second main threat. The Russians are working at full speed in preparation for this war. The Communist leaders have a fanatical determination to establish their Communist autocracy all over the world. This must start with the subjugation of the whole of Europe and of our country. It is therefore clear that we have two tasks ahead of us to meet these two threats.

THE FIRST TASK

TO rectify the present position and stop further Russian infiltration into Europe it will be necessary to keep a number of strong divisions in Europe and they will have to be supplied by the Western Nations. These divisions would need to be ready for use in cold war tactics at any moment during the next few years and they would have to be kept at full strength at all times. This means regular forces. It is quite impossible to stop Russian infiltration and similar tactics if the necessary forces to do so are not immediately available and have to be mobilized from a conscript army.

There are several examples of the way in which regular forces can be used with success to stop these Russian tactics. At the end of the war we had forces that were equal in quality to regular troops. Russia was very anxious to put Greece behind the Iron Curtain. She infiltrated into those regions and Greece asked for our help. We sent a first-class brigade with some attached troops. The effect was instantaneous. The presence of these very fine troops encouraged and delighted the inhabitants. The Russian fellow travellers withdrew. At a later stage American troops also assisted in this work. The Russian sponsored brigands are still at work but Greece has so far been saved. No large forces are needed for this work. So long as the people are on our side all they need is the leadership of first-class regular troops. We have other examples of the way in which regular forces have countered these Communist activities in Persia and more recently in Malaya. It is probable that about twenty regular divisions is the most that the Western Nations could find in the near future for use in Europe and this should be sufficient to stop any further cold war tactics by Russia.

We will consider the raising of these regular forces later, but let us for the moment assume that the Western Nations have bestirred themselves and achieved this result, our share of the twenty divisions being the provision of four full strength regular divisions. Of course the necessary air forces would have to be included, but for this cold warfare it is mainly infantry divisions that are needed. It should be remembered that with well-trained regular divisions there is less necessity to differentiate between types of division. The infantry brigades of a division are trained to co-operate with an

* General Martel was Commander of the Royal Armoured Corps in 1940 and Head of the Military Mission at Moscow in 1943.

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armoured brigade at any moment in just the same way as in an armoured division, and any division can be moved by air at short notice. Now that we are no longer responsible for India we should be able to raise these four regular divisions with the necessary armoured brigades and parachutists. Our first step will clearly be to restore the Berlin situation. If we had forced a convoy through as soon as the trouble arose I think we would have succeeded, but it is much too late to try and do so now after all the publicity that this matter has received. It must be remembered that neither ourselves nor the Americans possess much more than token forces in Germany. If we tried to put a guard on every bridge on our road into Berlin in addition to all our other duties it would only amount to a few men on each bridge. In the event of our using the road the Russians could easily hit these few men on the head and dismantle the bridge. It would, however, be quite a different story if we had four divisions and could put something like a battalion on each bridge.

THE Russians know full well that if they attacked a battalion it would be an act of war and that a full scale war would follow, which they certainly wish to avoid for the present. Moreover, when the Western Nations have twenty divisions in Germany we shall easily be able to hold up any attack which the Russians might launch against us with their thirty second-class divisions; which is all that they possess at present in Europe. Of course the Russians have another two hundred and fifty divisions in their own country but they are nearly all equipped with horse-drawn transport. It would take Russia a considerable time to move any large number of these divisions to Germany. In the meantime the Western Nations could mobilize and prepare for war.

Our first task therefore is quite clear. We must raise these regular divisions at the earliest possible moment. Every day counts. Any further delay might easily lead to the Russians being able to strengthen their hold in Europe with very serious results on the eventual situation. Having raised these forces the Western Nations should at once insist on

their right of access to their sectors of Berlin, using force if necessary to defend their communications.

THE SECOND TASK

WE now come to the second task. We will suppose that the necessary regular forces have been raised and that we have re-established our communications into Berlin. We will also assume that Western Germany has been consolidated and that the Russians have accepted this position, at any rate for the time being. Indeed, there is little else that Russia could do if we had twenty divisions in Germany. It seems, however, to be practically certain that Russia will continue with her preparations for an "all out" war with atom bombs and every other horror in, say, five years' time. What steps should we take to meet this threat? There are those who say that we should use our advantage in the possession of the atom bomb and attack Russia now. What purpose could this serve? We could no doubt destroy Moscow and some Russian industries and oil wells and force Russia to seek terms. But what would be the value of those peace terms. Is it not certain that Russia would become more determined than ever in her present policy and would launch a war at a later date which would come near to exterminating life in large parts of the world?

Although Russia is unlikely to start a Third World War until she is ready in about five years' time, the position might deteriorate to such an extent that the war might arise much sooner. We are therefore right in raising the territorial forces and reserves for all three services, and the other Western Nations are doing the same. These forces should have the immediate support of every patriotic citizen, even though they may not be needed in the near future. It is also essential for us to prepare for a Third World War and particularly to raise very powerful air forces in co-operation with America. Even if we do all these things it is very unlikely that the Communist leaders will renounce their fanatical determination to spread their Communist rule, and the war is almost certain to take place. If we have made the necessary

preparations we will certainly win but the most terrible destruction will be carried out on both sides.

DOES this mean that there is no solution and that there is no alternative to the endurance of all the horrors of a Third World War? Fortunately there is an alternative. The strength of the Communist leaders depends on the support which they receive from their people. What is the true position to-day. I have travelled over large parts of Russia and talked to the people. There is not the slightest doubt that the majority of the people have a strong dislike of the Communist regime and show not the slightest interest in the idea of spreading the Communist autocracy over the world. On the other hand, the Russian is a great patriot. The Communist leaders have convinced the people that their country is in great danger of being conquered by the Western capitalists. This has been done very cleverly and is firmly believed by a portion of the badly educated Russian people. As a result they are working very hard at agriculture and munitions to support their leaders, even though their standard of living is lower than that of the Tsarist days. Of course all the more educated people in Russia know full well that no Western nation has the slightest desire to subdue Russia provided the Communist leaders cease their infiltration methods and their large scale preparations for war. They do not dare, however, to say a single word about this to the populace.

Our solution therefore lies in spreading the truth and thus weakening the hold of the Communist leaders on the country, and helping the people to regain their liberty. Russia would then become incapable or undesirous of launching into war. This activity is generally called cold warfare and it is what Russia has been waging against the rest of the world ever since the war, but whereas she has propagandised falsehoods we would keep strictly to the truth.

COLD WARFARE

THIS work falls under three heads. First comes the necessity to spread the truth to the Russian people so that they will no

longer support the Communist leaders. They will demand a higher standard of living instead of munitions. This must be done by wireless and leaflets and all the modern technique for spreading information. Many people who know Russia well are certain that this can be achieved.

Secondly, we must be prepared at any moment to go to the assistance of any Western group or nation and strengthen their hand in the event of Communist trouble.

Thirdly, there are countries such as Czechoslovakia where there is an almost universal desire on the part of the people to rule themselves democratically but the country is held down by a few Communist rulers. In such cases we must be ready to answer an appeal for help in sending in small regular forces to enable the people to regain their freedom. If one British division entered Czechoslovakia at their request and marched through Prague the population would go wild with delight and acclaim the troops. The members of the Russian fifth column and their fellow travellers would disappear out of the country as fast as they could go and Czechoslovakia would be saved.

In other countries, such as in Germany and Poland where there are large Russian forces the position would be different. If the democratic people of these countries wished to throw off the Russian yoke and regain their freedom they would have to raise resistance movements. These already exist on a large scale in Poland. We have wide experience in this work and could assist these democratic movements in that way. The same applies to many parts of Russia such as the Ukraine and the Baltic States where there is intense hatred of the Communist party. Such movements would probably need considerable assistance before they could arise and dethrone the Communist leaders.

THESE are the ways in which we would have to set about the problem if we wish to safeguard the freedom of the world without recourse to another world war. For this work it is again highly trained regular forces that we need and not large numbers of

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conscripts. There are some people who consider that at this stage Russia would declare a patriotic war to unite her people. But if we have acted with the necessary speed this moment will occur long before Russia is prepared and possesses the atom bomb. If she attacked us under these conditions she would certainly lose. If she did not attack the position in Russia would deteriorate. Dissension would arise between the Communist leaders. Who can tell what would happen at this stage? Serious revolts and rebellions might arise. The position in Russia might soon be such that she would be incapable of waging a great war. The threat to the rest of the world would be removed. In due course we would hope that a sound government would become established with which we could all work in harmony. Success in these plans would however depend entirely on the speed with which we could lay on the cold warfare. This must be done at once.

CAN WE RAISE THESE FORCES?

I HAVE set out the main threats to the security of the World and the two tasks which we must accomplish to meet those threats. We must now consider the practicality of the proposals which have been made. Put very briefly the methods which we propose to use as regards the army are as follows, and I should like to make it clear that many other officers have helped in this work, and that Captain Liddell Hart was I believe the first to draw attention to this vital matter about the effect of conscription. The present strength of our Army is over 400,000 men and consists mainly of conscripts. We have however 160,000 regular soldiers, but a large proportion of these have to be employed at our stations abroad for which conscripts cannot usefully be employed. Of those that are left over, the majority have to be employed in connection with the instruction and care of the conscripts. As a result our regular units at home and in Germany are in a deplorable state. It does not matter saying these things for Russia knows it full well. The extension of the conscript training from 1 year to 18 months will clearly help and may tide over the immediate

difficulties but it is not the right solution for the future.

We do not believe that it is possible to raise sufficient regular soldiers to maintain all the great training establishments and accommodation needed by the large conscript army and also to provide the necessary strength in regulars for use in Europe. We would therefore propose to stop at once all conscript training, at any rate until the present crisis has passed. The dangers of doing so will be considered later. Having taken this step our aim would be to raise a regular army of 200,000 men. This would provide for garrisons abroad and a total of four full strength regular divisions for use in Germany with armoured brigades and parachutists attached. This strength would of course only cover the four divisions and their essential transport for supplies. That is all that is needed for cold warfare. The provision of Corps and Army troops with their heavy equipment which is needed for a world war would have to wait till we mobilized. It must also be made clear that some trained conscripts would have to be retained as a temporary measure until the regular army had expanded to this size. We propose a long service army in which any man would have the right to remain with the colours for twenty or even thirty years if he wished to do so. The attraction of a job for keeps with an adventurous life and a pension at the end is very great. This would certainly become the finest army in the world and provide a great attraction for recruiting. It would also attract many old soldiers who would come rushing back to rejoin the colours. There is little doubt that recruiting would soon raise our 160,000 regulars to the 200,000 which we need. Of course pay and conditions would have to be improved, but this could readily be achieved by the great saving effected in reducing the army from over 400,000 to 200,000 men.

It may be thought that there would be difficulty in carrying out all these tasks, at home and abroad, with 200,000 men. It must, however, be remembered that a task can be carried out by far fewer men when regulars are available. In addition, very

great savings can be effected in training schools and other establishments when an army changes from a conscript to a regular basis.

WE must now consider if there is any danger in abolishing conscription, at any rate for the present. In the first place conscripts are intended as a reserve for the regular army, but it is unlikely that our regular army will have heavy casualties in cold warfare. If it becomes a hot war they have a territorial army behind them. In the second place the conscripts are intended as a reserve to fill up the territorial army. But we already possess a magnificent reserve of between four and five million war-seasoned troops. Only a small proportion of these splendid soldiers would be needed to fill up the territorial army, and the necessary volunteers would certainly become available at once in a crisis. It therefore seems that for the next five to ten years, while we possess this reserve, the training of the conscripts is of little military value and does not begin to balance the great loss in having so little available in regular forces.

Finally, we come to the question of the value to the nation of conscript training. Certainly a man becomes a better citizen when he has spent a number of years in the regular army, but in that case he is led by old and experienced leaders. The regular Army has done its best and evolved a fine plan for the training of the conscripts, but it cannot possibly give the care and attention to a conscript which it gives to the small number of regulars who join a regular unit. I am very doubtful about the claims that

are made for the value gained by the conscript in his army training. On the adverse side there is not the slightest doubt that conscription is a serious handicap to the training of craftsman. Any works where a large number of apprentices are normally learning their skilled trade will verify this statement. The lad does not join up for his apprenticeship because he is going to be called up. He then spends rather a comfortable time in the army for a year. After that he may be a bit unsettled and he does not feel like starting his apprenticeship. Anyway the figures prove this result. For our country this is a very serious matter. Another important point is that the reduction in the demands of the army for man power by over a half if we drop conscription would be a very material assistance to industry.

CONCLUSION

OUR conclusion can be brief and clear. We must put every effort into spreading the truth to the Russian people so that they will cease to support the Communist leaders in their determination to subjugate all the other nations. This is the most important task with which the world has ever been faced. To stop the Russian infiltration and to assist democratic states to regain their freedom, the Western Nations must provide at least twenty regular divisions in Europe with the minimum of delay. We must also raise the necessary forces to meet the threat of a third world war but if only we can spread the truth to the Russian people in the next few years we can hope that these forces will never be used.



ROCKALL : MOST LONELY OF ISLANDS

By SETON GORDON

EMERGING, surf-girdled, from the Atlantic 289 miles west of Ardnamurchan Point in Scotland and 268 miles from Bloody Foreland in Eire stands a small, rocky island, remote and inaccessible—Rockall. From time immemorial seamen have feared it and when possible have given it a wide berth, for, unlighted as it is, it has sent stout ships to their doom. In July of the year 1904 it was the scene of a comparatively recent disaster, when the Norwegian liner *Norge* struck the reef and foundered with the loss of 750 passengers.

One of the earliest writers to mention Rockall was Martin Martin, one of the Martins of the Bealach, beside Duntuilin in northern Skye. He was tutor or governor to the young MacLeod of Dunvegan, and at another time was tutor to the son of MacDonald of the Isles. Martin's book, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, published in 1703, is a classic. He also published a smaller book, *A Voyage to St. Kilda*, which describes a hazardous voyage

he made in the year 1698. In that book he writes of the crew of a vessel which foundered on "Rokol far west off St. Kilda." Of this event Martin writes:

"When the shipwrecked mariners came in a Pinnace to St. Kilda, they were plentifully supplied with barley, bread, butter, cheese, solan goose eggs, etc. Upon their Landing, they pointed to the West, naming Rokol to the inhabitants, and after that they pointed downward with their Finger, signifying the sinking and perishing of their Vessel."

Rockall or Rokol (the meaning of the name is uncertain but is probably Norse) lies 191 land miles west-south-west of St. Kilda, the nearest land, so that the mariners had sailed far in their small craft, and doubtless considered themselves fortunate to be alive. Their pinnace was so low in the water that they decided to heighten the craft all round by a foot of canvas before continuing their voyage to the mainland of Scotland, more than 100 miles to the east.

They did not, it appears, realize the strictness of Sabbath observance by the St. Kildans, for, in Martin's words:

"they began to work at it upon Sunday; at which the Inhabitants were astonished, and being Highly Dissatisfied, plucked the Hatchets and other Instruments out of their Hands, and did not restore them until Monday morning."

The danger of the Rockall area to a vessel is not so much the visible rock, deadly as that may be on a dark, moonless night, as the reef which is near it. Haslewood Rock, covered at half-tide, is a small detached rock lying one and a half cables north-eastward from Rockall, with a depth of thirty fathoms of water between the two. Helen's Reef is still more dangerous, for it lies nearly two miles from the main rock in an east-by-south direction. It is a small reef, and has about six feet of water above it at low tide. The summit of the reef has at times been seen at low water in the trough of the seas, but usually the swell breaks on it only at long intervals in fine weather. Fishermen believe that another and deeper-seated shoal lies three to four miles east of Helen's Reef.

It is said that Rockall is the smallest area of dry land, in the shape of rock or island, at so great a distance from the nearest land, to be found anywhere in the world. St. Paul's Rocks, which rise from the Atlantic almost on the Equator, are comparable with Rockall in the remoteness of situation, but there the climate is tropical and the rocks are used by a succession of sea birds throughout the year as a nesting site.

Rockall and St. Paul's Rocks have only one thing in common, the Atlantic swell which beats upon them both. Rockall, rising in latitude 57 degrees 36 minutes north, is in one of the most tempestuous areas of the North Atlantic, beset by ocean winds and storms throughout the year. In winter fishermen and the airmen of Coastal Command have seen the waves sweep over its pointed summit, rising 70 feet from the turbulent waters.

Rockall is the highest peak of a mountain range, the valleys and summits of which are beneath the sea, and perhaps represents the sole visible part of the lost continent of

Atlantis. Between the Rockall Bank and the British Isles the Atlantic reaches the depth of 1,660 fathoms: the depths between Rockall and Britain are indeed greater than between Rockall and Iceland, which is considerably farther from it. This small rocky island has a circumference at its base of no more than 250 feet: there is no harbour nor creek of any kind which might give a landing-place, and thus it is only in the finest and calmest weather conditions that a landing is possible. Expeditions have been fitted out and have sailed for Rockall hoping to land and make investigations there, but have been foiled by the Atlantic swell. Twice during June of the year 1896 an expedition under the leadership of Harvie-Brown and Barrington sailed from the north of Ireland, and on each occasion stormy weather prevented a landing, or even a very near approach.

THERE has long been an element of doubt whether the sea birds which use Rockall as a resting-place choose it as a nesting-place, and this expedition steamed in sufficiently close to the rock to see that the broad ledge just below the summit was crowded by a colony of some 250 guillemots, which jostled one another on the only ledge on which eggs could be laid. Perhaps the only scientist to make a landing on Rockall was the French explorer Charcot, who, on his way to the Arctic in his celebrated ship *Pourquoi Pas?* sent a party ashore, not without difficulty, on 29th June and 1st July of the summer of 1921. Their interest was more in geology than in the birds and they did not climb the rock. They were successful in obtaining specimens of that rare mineral named Rockallite, believed to be found nowhere but on the face of Rockall, whence its name.

During the First World War, a cruiser, forming one of the escort of an ocean convoy, sighted, on a dark and misty night, what seemed to be a vessel without lights. His Majesty's ship challenged the stranger, and requested the Recognition Signal. It was not given, and the vessel remained unlit and throwing up an apparent bow wave as

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she seemed, toward the convoy. Orders were then given to ram, but fortunately the true character of the object was seen in time, for the strongest ship would have little chance against this outpost island of rock. From the air, too (as I shall describe later), the resemblance of Rockall to a warship is most striking. During the second world war convoys kept well off the Rockall Bank, and, so far as is known, there was no submarine activity close to the rock.

The Commander-in-Chief, Coastal Command, R.A.F., has been good enough to send me an account of operations in that zone during the war years. On 6th January, 1941, a Sunderland flying-boat when on convoy duties sighted an Italian submarine approximately 60 miles north-west of Rockall. The Sunderland engaged the submarine, which was sunk. The same flying-boat (H/210) had previously, on 16th August, 1940, attacked and damaged a U-boat approximately 50 miles south-east of the rock. A Whitley aircraft, on 26th August, 1941, attacked and damaged a U-boat approximately 30 miles due north of Rockall, and three weeks later, on 18th September, a training Liberator aircraft sighted a German submarine in position 58 degrees 1 minute north and 14 degrees 10 minutes west, but was unable to attack. This submarine was approximately 25 miles north-west of Rockall, the closest sighting of enemy submarines to the rock during the war years. On 15th September, 1942, a Whitley aircraft attacked and sank U-boat 261 in position 59 degrees 9 minutes north, 9 degrees 28 minutes west. Eighteen months later a Wellington Leigh Light aircraft attacked and sank U-boat 545 in a position approximately 40 miles north of the rock. The last attack on enemy submarines in these waters was made on 29th April, 1945, when a Liberator Leigh Light aircraft made two attacks on U-boat 1017 and sank it approximately 100 miles south-east of Rockall.

I HAD long wished to see Rockall, and an opportunity was afforded me during the summer of 1946.

The expedition, a memorable one, was

made in a seaplane which, rising from Portree Bay in the Isle of Skye, a little later was cruising round the island group of St. Kilda, home of innumerable sea birds. Hirta, the largest of the St. Kilda group, was inhabited by the human race from time immemorial until recent years, and during the 1914-18 war had the distinction of being shelled by a German submarine. Some years before the Second World War the human population left the island and during the war, air patrol having largely taken the place of watching from the land, it remained uninhabited. The precipice on Hirta is 1,300 feet sheer, and, seen from the air, is no less impressive than from the ocean. The morning sun shone full on that vast cliff where green oases of grass served but to accentuate the grimness of the rock. The noble cone of Boreray rises more than 1,200 feet from ocean deeps four miles north of Hirta. Two rock stacks rise beside it, one to the north, the other to the south: both are the home of great colonies of gannets. On Stack Lee gannets were present in their tens of thousands; as we swiftly approached they rose into the air, swarming around the stack like angry bees outside a snow-white hive. Some of the birds, sailing in our path high above the stack, saw us in time to take swift avoiding action, falling headlong past us in wild, terrified flight. On the high grassy slopes of Boreray two flocks of gannets were resting. These were the bachelors and spinsters of the colony. Martin Martin, who visited the island in 1698, and has given us the first naturalist's notes on it, writes of these birds that:

"There is a Tribe of barren Solan Geese which have no Nests and sit upon the bare Rock; these are not the Young Fowls of a Year Old, whose Dark Colour would soon distinguish them, but Old ones, in all things like the rest; these have a Province, as it were, allotted to them, and are in a separate State, having a Rock Two hundred Paces distant from all other; neither do they meddle with, or approach to those hatching, or any other Fowl; they sympathize and fish together: this was told me by the Inhabitants, and

afterwards confirmed several times by my own Observation."

The gannet takes at least four years to mature and thus presumably lives to a great age, and these birds which keep to themselves are perhaps too old to nest. They rose gracefully into the west wind, looking from the air no larger than kittiwakes.

Circling Boreray, we saw beneath us Stac an Armuinn (the Knight's Rock), thin, dark and formidable, its walls inaccessible even to the skilled rock climber. Again we skirted Hirta, and had a momentary view of the deserted village where the people of St. Kilda lived, perhaps ever since the Norse occupation of that lonely island group.

WE now set a course west-south-west, steering out into the Atlantic towards Rockall, which rose somewhere beneath the horizon 191 miles distant. The sky was blue and fleecy; cumulus clouds moved on the breath of the west wind. We had flown twenty-five miles when we saw a trawler fishing, a cloud of white sea birds, feeding no doubt on the entrails of the fish as they were gutted, stretching away far to leeward. Beneath us as we flew gannets made their way to distant fishing-grounds. Fifty miles west of their stack, where we had less than half an hour previously seen them carrying on their affairs of the breeding season, a flock were flying to and fro above the sea, or resting on the water, no doubt after fishing. West of that assembly no gannet was seen.

We flew through a shower and a rainbow glowed above the sea. When viewed from the land a rainbow is an arc, but from the air the full circle of rainbow colours is seen and the effect is indeed beautiful. A hundred miles west of Hirta we saw ahead of us dark banks of cumulo-nimbus clouds. We flew into a cloud and the light ebbed as though we had entered a tunnel: the sound of the rain against the aircraft almost drowned the deep roar of our four powerful engines. Soon we saw a window of blue sky through the mist and, more quickly than it takes to relate, were flying once more in clear sunny weather, through a cloud-studded sky of great beauty.

We continued to fly on a steady, even

course, white-capped waves of a blue sea below us, the blue, smiling sky above us, for the space of rather more than an hour, when was seen, fifteen miles ahead of us, what appeared to be a battleship steaming towards us, a white bow wave rising from her bluff stem. We passed through a shower which for a short time hid the fancied warship, and when we once more flew through clear air saw that the ship was Rockall, rising lonely from an empty sea. In the strong noontide sun Rockall's white cap shone like snow. This white cap often misled mariners of old into thinking they had sighted a vessel under sail. On a July day of the year 1810 Captain Basil Hall of H.M.S. *Endymion* was cruising in these latitudes when, in his own words:

"A sail was reported on the lee beam. We bore up instantly, but no one could make out what the chase was, nor which way she was standing. The general opinion was that it must be a brig with very white sails aloft, while those below were quite dark, as if the royals were made of cotton and the courses of tarpaulin. We discovered, on running close to our mysterious vessel, that we had actually been chasing a rock."

Captain Hall's party effected a landing and obtained what are probably the only specimens of the rock of Rockall in this country, although more than 100 years later Charcot took specimens to France.

As we neared Rockall its seventy-feet-high cone seemed small indeed as compared with the great precipices of Hirta and Boreray we had so recently flown over. Here was a tiny outpost of land, the summit of a great hill range deep buried beneath the waters. A short distance to the north of Rockall we could see the waves breaking white upon the submerged Haslewood Rock.

My notes, written at the time, recorded that a close aerial view of Rockall called to mind a haystack leaning slightly to one side, and tightly tied with a band of white grass, the upper part of the stack lightly covered with snow. This white appearance is due to the droppings of sea birds and gives, at a distance, the illusion of a vessel under sail.

THE IRON AND STEEL BILL IN PRACTICE

By H. E. CRAWFURD*

IN the pamphlet entitled "Steel is Power", prepared by the Labour Research Department, and published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., there are three sentences which I will take as my text. Here they are—"An economist or an engineer could easily rearrange the steel jigsaw puzzle into a nice tidy pattern. But only on paper. In the actuality there are people, homes and habits and existing plants and assets, to consider."

"But only on paper." I am not concerned here with the political and ideological issues raised by the Iron and Steel Bill; I am concerned to ask whether the machinery set out in its clauses will in practice give us the steel for use at home and export abroad that our own industries need and for which foreign countries will give us food and the raw materials for our industries. In a word, will it work?

Finished steel, in the forms in which it is finally delivered to other industries as their raw material, for shipbuilding, tin-plate manufacture, constructional engineering in all its branches, or as flats, rounds, rods, angles, or tubes for the infinite variety of other engineering industries, is the product of a series of processes each requiring expert oversight and workmanship at every stage.

PIG-IRON, one of the two main raw materials of steel, is made in the blast furnaces by the interaction of iron ore, coke, limestone, and a lesser quantity of scrap. Iron-ores vary in constitution, in richness of iron content and in the presence or absence of other materials, perhaps valuable in themselves but ranking as impurities in the manufacture of iron. The blast furnace itself is modified in structure from time to time. At the present moment there are certain changes being made which arise from purely technical considerations.

The resulting pig-iron, either cooled or as hot-metal, is used with larger quantities of iron and steel scrap in the main method of steel-manufacture and the open-hearth furnace. Scrap itself has to be carefully prepared and must be comparatively free from various impurities. During the operation in the furnace there is a constant process of tapping and analysing the melt to ensure that it is of the right composition. In every case the utmost care and over-sight has to be exercised throughout. Management and workmen alike are highly skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced. When you are dealing with seventy or eighty tons of molten steel the sense of personal responsibility is very highly developed. Decisions have to be made on the spot according to circumstances. It is true to say that in no other industrial process is the sense of responsibility so keen and ever-present.

BUT, it may be said, what are you worried about? Under the provisions of this Bill the different steel firms may retain their identity; the management and executives, too, are kept as they are and can function as before with all the advantages of skill and experience of which you prate. The only change is in ownership.

It is true the structure of the industry appears to remain the same. But if this is so what need is there to give the Corporation such sweeping powers? It is a delusion to believe that a body armed with such powers will fail to exercise them—if for instance a large capital development is contemplated. In some of these matters the Bill actually

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directs the Corporation, under the control of the Minister, to carry out operations themselves.

It is surely a commonplace to say that the greatest technical efficiency can only be had when responsibility is given in the fullest degree to management. It is impossible to believe that such responsibility can co-exist with an over-riding authority at the centre. The power to make decisions is the essence of responsibility and it is impossible to believe that this will not be filched away. In the initial stages the centralized control may rely on the advice of the men who know, but it is equally certain that gradually the possession of power by the control at the centre will lead to the exercise of it. That is only the common experience of all human institutions.

Owing to the need for a high degree of knowledge and experience, the large firms in the Iron and Steel Industry have to a great extent specialized each on the production of certain types of finished steel material. At the same time it is not true to say that any particular branch of the industry is carried on, and only carried on, by a few specialized firms. So it is not a practical proposition to say—"such and such firms are engaged as a separate section of the industry" (for instance those making special steels for tool-making, as suggested by G. D. H. Cole) and therefore they can be separated from the main firms of the industry, and, if need be, left alone. The circumstances under which the industry has developed and the close integration of the

manufacturing practice arising from the dependence of one process on another has given rise to the creation of large units which themselves or through their Associated Companies, engage in many stages of manufacture from the raw materials right down to the finished product ready for use. I shall refer to this again later.

It is important to realize that this is not a fortuitous characteristic or one dictated by an evil desire to create a monopoly or control the markets for a particular product. It has come about because the needs of a particular market, cheapness and quality for the consumer, have been served by a vertical organization of the production of iron and steel products at several stages. It is this feature, added to the intricacies of the manufacturing process itself, that has given to the iron and steel industry its highly complicated structure.

Those who favour nationalization continually deny that cheapness and quality have been served by the present organization of the industry. Nevertheless, users of steel have not been served so badly. A few figures may be illuminating. For instance, to-day, with a great expansion in both volume and value of British exports, this "inefficient" Iron and Steel industry is the basic material of 46 per cent of these exports compared with 35 per cent in 1938. In the matter of price, all-important in an industry producing semi-finished products, the record is also striking. Here are some of the latest figures:

(£ Sterling per ton of 2.240 lbs.)												
	U.K.			U.S.A.			France.			Belgium.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Billets for re-rolling 2" square	14	7	6	17	19	9	16	6	9	14	12	4
Angles 5" x 5" x ½"	17	1	6	22	11	4	23	11	10	18	5	2
Plates 20' x 5' x ¼"	18	6	6	22	16	11	27	19	11	19	7	9
Sheets 6' x 3' x 20' S.W.G.	25	1	0	26	14	9	32	12	10	27	18	0
Tinplate (per basis box)	1	17	5½	1	13	9	2	16	9	3	0	1

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And these figures are typical. In fact, taken over the whole range of steel products, prices of the British industry are the cheapest in the world with the exception of Australia.

WHAT frightens the practical man, who has a wide personal knowledge of the industry, is the idea that this most intricate machine, manned to-day by some of the most highly-skilled operatives in the world under the supervision of managements equally skilled and equally experienced, is to be taken out of the control of those who have an intimate knowledge, each of his own part of the machine, and handed over to a Corporation, which even if it consisted of archangels, could not possibly exercise the same ceaseless vigilance over the operations of every part.

I am not here concerned with any question of political theory, or the rights or wrongs of shareholders, or academic discussions about what is a monopoly and what is not. All I care about here is that we are producing steel at a record rate for this country, well into the swing of an intense production effort, and the mechanism that is producing these results is to be upset and fundamentally altered in character. Is this the time for drastic changes? We have nationalized coal, and in the last six months some half-dozen inquests have been held to enquire into the reasons why we are not producing enough coal. The one conclusion that most people seem to agree on is the need for the decentralization of control. Coal-mines no doubt vary in character from district to district but that variation is a dull sameness compared to the variety of processes carried out by the 107 companies scheduled to be acquired under this Bill.

LOOK for instance at the terms of what is called the "Explanatory and Financial Memorandum":—

"The Corporation are to have power to carry on those activities (referred to hereinafter as 'the second schedule activities') or any other activities which the companies, together with their wholly owned subsidiaries, are authorized by their memoranda of association or charter to carry on....

The Corporation may acquire or set up companies for the purpose of their authorized activities, but shall not increase their authorized activities without the consent of the Minister.

The Minister may require discontinuance or restriction of any of the activities of the Corporation or of the publicly owned companies."

And again

"The Minister may give the Corporation general directions in matters appearing to him to affect the national interest."

"In carrying out capital development and re-organization and in providing for training, education, and research, the Corporation are to act in accordance with general programmes settled from time to time with the approval of the Minister."

Here we have the whole vast and varied range of activities of the British Iron and Steel Industry, in which at the moment hundreds of men are shouldering the responsibility each of his own particular task, destined, if the Bill becomes law and comes into operation, to pass under the control of no more than eleven men (the maximum number of members of the Corporation laid down in Clause I (1) of the Bill), and even these eleven subjected in the last resort to the almost absolute control of a Minister who may be appointed for purely political reasons.

Every business man, and certainly every responsible industrialist, will tell you that the first essential for progressive development of an industry, or indeed of a business of any kind, is confidence in the future. That is to say confidence to this extent that conditions will be such that the success or failure of plans for development will depend on their intrinsic merit, and not on the caprice of any person or on considerations derived from motives unconnected with the object of the undertaking.

To produce steel, of good quality and of reasonable cheapness, and in progressively greater quantities to satisfy the demands of our home users and our export trade. That is the practical task that confronts the Iron and Steel Industry in our country. There is not one line, or clause, or word in this Bill that contributes to that end.

THE Bill would set up what in effect would be a monopoly in the four main functions set out in the second schedule of the Bill—"The working and getting of iron-ore," "The smelting of iron-ore in a blast furnace," "The production in the form of ingots of steel (including alloy steel)" and "The changing of the cross-sectional dimensions or cross-sectional shape of steel by hot rolling in a rolling mill." This last, of course, means the production of the ordinary types of finished steel.

But it goes much further than this. Not only does it propose to take over the main companies producing pig-iron and steel, but it takes power—or rather endows the Minister with powers—to curtail the activities of the firms not taken over.

The Bill provides that any firm making any considerable quantities (as defined in the second schedule) of the products of the activities I have just enumerated must first get a Licence from the Minister. This licence may:

- a. Limit the period for which the licence may be in force.
- b. Limit the extent to which any of the said activities is to be carried out.
- c. Control the maximum price of the products of those activities, and
- d. Impose restrictions as to the persons to whom these products may be sold, and confer on the Corporation an option to purchase any of them.

In addition to this the Corporation will control the raw material which the excluded firms will need for their operations, since practically 100 per cent of the available iron-ore supplies will be acquired by them, as well as some 97 per cent of the steel billets. They will also control the price of this raw and semi-raw material.

WHAT does this mean? Two persons open a shop, presumably to serve their customers as best they can. One, having the power to do so conferred on him, says to the other "I shall let you have the amount of stock I think fit. I shall limit the period for which you are allowed to trade; I shall tell you how much you may sell; I shall tell you

what price you are to fix on your goods; I shall select the customers to whom you may sell, and if I want to I shall take your goods at a price fixed by myself".

IN effect, the State-controlled firms will actively compete with those which escape the State monopoly. A big premium will thus be placed upon unfair allocations of raw material. This is what Mr. Churchill had in mind when he said "the big dog must be fed first", and pointed out that this meant that "the Minister (a Socialist Industrial Commissar) would have the power to knock out the weaker firms outside".

And in face of this Mr. G. D. H. Cole has the effrontery to say "there is no valid reason why finished steel products manufactured under public and under private enterprise should not compete". If these provisions of the Bill mean anything at all, they mean that the Corporation which controls the publicly-owned Companies is to be given power, or rather the Minister is, to hamstring or to crush all possible rivals.

To put it in even simpler language, the Government have realized the extreme complexity of taking over all the firms in the industry. So they propose to take over the largest and drive the others out of business. Surely, no more immoral proposal can ever have been tabled in a Bill put before Parliament.

Quite apart from the question of justice, one may well ask, what of the users of steel? The engineer, the motor-car manufacturer, the tool maker, the hardware manufacturer and an infinite number of others. They are to be left at the mercy of a bureaucratic monopoly that is so apprehensive of its own inefficiency that it proposes to take statutory powers to get rid of any or all opposition.

There is another consideration of major importance. As I have explained, some of the steel companies have under their control subsidiaries which are concerned in producing a large variety of articles down to the point where they are ready for use. The acquisition of these concerns has not resulted from any megalomaniac desire to own more and more but has been a process of evolution following on definite economic

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considerations—chiefly the advantages of the economic use of raw materials and the close dependence of one process upon another.

ONE reason for this normal evolution of practice in steel-making depends upon the economy produced by the conservation of heat. Thus the coking-ovens which produce coke for the manufacture of pig-iron in the blast furnaces themselves provide some of the heat for the latter. When the operation in the blast furnace is finished the pig-iron is tapped and, in modern practice conveyed still molten to the steel furnace. The steel ingots still white-hot are conveyed to the cogging mills and the process of rolling and shaping goes on continuously until the final products such as rails, girders, plates, sheets, tubes, wire, etc., are produced.

The less cooling and re-heating that takes place in this long process the greater is the economy in heat. So gradually a whole series of operations, formerly separate, and carried on maybe in separate places, are grouped together on one site and under one management. Clearly this consideration, based on economy in production, must result in the physical integration of what were once wholly self-contained industries.

But there is another thing to be borne in mind, not only is economy in manufacture desirable but it is also of the first importance to get the product that is wanted. It is wrong to think of steel as of unvarying quality. There is a great variety of types, with different composition and of varying tensile strength depending on the purpose for which the steel is required. Thus in the case of high-speed steel from which tools needed in certain manufacturing processes are made, the exact composition of the steel with its mixture of other elements is of the highest importance. The connection between the precise composition of the steel and the saleability of what is made from it is so intimate that it has been found in practice that integration of the two businesses makes for economy.

THE same is true of the tin-plate industry in South Wales and many others which there is not space here to enumerate.

LET me give just one example of where this has already happened. Some of the Steel Companies own collieries. The reason for this was that these collieries produced precisely the kind of coking coal which was useful for the operations in the blast furnaces. Amongst the products of subsidiary Companies too we find as shown above such items as colliery arches and pit props. Quite clearly the integration of the ownership of the colliery, the production of the pig iron and subsequently steel and the making of the arches and props helps these closely allied operations. Already under the nationalization of coal these mines have been divorced from their former ownership.

Here are some of the products of these subsidiary companies taken at random from a list of some two hundred—Agricultural Machinery, Architectural Metalwork, Baths, Boiler Tubes, Cisterns, Colliery Arches, Davits, Derricks, Engineers Tools, Gates, Golf Shafts, Iron Castings, Lathe Tools, Marine Crankshafts, Nuts, Pit Props, Pumps, Railway Wagons, Road Slag, Rope-Wire, Rudder Frames, Stern Frames, Telephone Kiosks, Ventilators, Wheels, Wire Netting, and so on.

IF this Bill becomes law then one of two things will happen. Many of these operations may be divorced from their parent organizations. This is provided for in Clause 4 (4) (a) which says that the Minister may direct the Corporation "to discontinue or restrict any of their activities or to dispose of any part of their assets".

In such a case the subsidiary company will lose the advantages of association with its parent and those advantages will be lost to the detriment of the nation's economy and at the ultimate cost of the consumer. Alternatively, if the subsidiaries are retained by the Corporation, a whole range of industrial undertakings of the most varied character will also be subjected to the same bureaucratic control as the Steel Companies themselves.

To sum up, this Bill seeks to interfere with the organization of an industry that is working to-day at an all-time high level of

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production; it will give to the publicly-owned companies such dictatorial powers over any competitor that must inevitably lead to the disintegration of businesses left outside the scope of the Bill, and it cuts right across a network of related concerns whose association with the Steel Companies has been and is an effective and useful part of the iron and steel production of this country.

It must not be forgotten that for nine

years we have had experience of Government controls in the steel industry. In the war period, they were fully accepted and worked fairly well, as the Government were almost the only buyers. Since 1945 the system of allocation has worked much less well and grave miscalculations arose, which resulted in loss of production and costs higher than were needful. Now those responsible for iron and steel want to be left alone to get on with their job.

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

WHATEVER else the New Year may or may not bring it is to be devoutly hoped that it will bring a sense of reality to the British Government where Spain is concerned. Mr. Churchill is certainly moving in the right direction, if somewhat slowly. The strategy of Lord Montgomery is clearly based on what is termed the defence of the perimeter, that is to say on action from the British Isles, the Iberian Peninsula, and North Africa. If war comes very little of the mainland of Europe is likely to be held North of the Pyrenees, at any rate in the earlier stages of the conflict. In these circumstances the friendship of Spain is not only desirable, but vital, for it is only with the cordial co-operation of the Spanish Government that the defence of the West can be assured.

The state of France does not warrant optimism in respect of whole-hearted opposition to Russian attack, and although Italian public opinion is probably in a much healthier condition Italy is extremely vulnerable. On the other hand no uncertainty exists as to either the will or the ability of the Spaniards to fight: they have seen the workings of Communism on their own soil, and they have no illusions regarding its beastliness. The American Service chiefs are fully aware of all this, and it is clear that on the other side of the Atlantic there is a growing feeling in favour of bringing to an end the ostracism to which Spain has been subjected since the end of the late war.

THE attitude of the British Government in this matter is wholly discreditable, for Mr. Attlee and his colleagues are placing the interest of Socialism before those of the country. Any approach to General Franco would mean that they would have to eat their own words and also face another revolt of their Left Wing. Sooner than this they are prepared to jeopardize the defence of Western Europe, including the British Isles, against the mounting peril from the East. Indeed, it is difficult to resist the

conclusion that some of the present Government's supporters would rather hand over to a Russian than to a Conservative successor. To such fantastic lengths has ostracism of General Franco been carried that when an international conference was held a few weeks ago on the subject of saving life at sea no invitation was sent to Spain, though one would have thought that nothing could have less to do with politics than the preservation of the lives of drowning sailors.

A few weak-kneed Conservatives have also, it must be confessed, supported the Government attitude in the hope that it would bring about the overthrow of the existing Spanish regime. Never have expectations been proved more groundless. The Spaniards are a proud people who will not accept dictation from abroad, and they have rallied to General Franco, who is in consequence more firmly entrenched in power than ever. Such a result could surely have been foreseen. Suppose the United States made Marshall Aid dependent upon the removal of the British Socialist Government from office, would the latter not experience an enormous reaction in its favour? The answer is not in doubt.

BUT, it is said, was not General Franco bhostile during the war? Even if he had been it would not matter much now: what is of importance to-day is not the attitude which people took in the last war but the attitude which they are likely to adopt in the next. Actually, it is becoming every day more obvious that General Franco resisted considerable pressure from Hitler. Of course he thought Germany would win, but then so did most of the world outside the British Isles, at any rate for some months after the fall of France. All the same he did not, like Mussolini, come out openly on the side of Hitler, though had he done so he could have had Gibraltar for the asking. If Great Britain had been deprived of Gibraltar at that time, she would have lost the Mediter-

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anean and with it Malta and Egypt. This would in all probability have entailed the loss of the war itself.

We cannot afford a foreign policy based on likes and dislikes: it must be based on the realities of the international situation. The way in which the Spaniards choose to govern themselves is no affair of ours, and the sooner Ministers get that idea into their heads the better. General Franco has proved that he is no menace to the rest of the world, and this is all that matters. We never question the existing regime in Russia, though Stalin has grabbed half a continent.

QUITE a number of people in this country disliked Tsarism and all its works, but that did not prevent us from entering the First World War as the ally of Nicholas II, and we should probably have been beaten by the end of 1914 had we not done so. In an earlier age we did not despise the assistance of the Turks against the French Revolution, for as Canning put it, "We must seek help from every quarter, even from the Grand Signior, who should not be rejected merely because he wears a long beard and a long gown". Party politics on one side, it has never been easy to understand the attitude adopted by the British Government towards General Franco. There are many nations, apart from Russia herself, behind the Iron Curtain with whom we

maintain fully accredited representatives, but it can hardly be maintained that, for example, Rumania and Bulgaria possess regimes which are congenial to the mass of British public opinion. Why, too, should Tito enjoy favours denied to Franco?

The history of both German and Russian aggression during the past twenty years is that they flourish on the disunity of the Western Powers. Four hundred years ago the Turks swept up from the Bosphorus to Vienna for exactly the same reason, yet there were repeated occasions when a little more co-operation between their opponents would have stopped their career. In Spain the sole alternative to General Franco is anarchy, which is exactly what the Kremlin desires. "Europe Red at both ends" has long been the Communist cry, and that policy very nearly proved successful in the Spanish Civil War. If it could be put into practice now the Mediterranean would be lost, and the whole of Lord Montgomery's plans negative in advance.

Of one thing there can be no doubt, and it is that time is pressing. In a few short weeks spring and the campaigning season with all their unknown possibilities will be here. Before then the defenders of civilization must complete their preparations and of these the most urgent is the integration of the Iberian Peninsula in their strategy.

Theatre

MEN AND WOMEN

HUBERT GRIFFITH

THE WILD DUCK, by Ibsen. (St. Martin's.)

THE FATHER, by Strindberg. (Embassy, Swiss Cottage.)

ORANGES AND LEMONS (Revue). (Lyric.) (Hammersmith.)

A LA CARTE (Revue). (Savoy.)

SLINGS AND ARROWS (Revue). (Comedy.)

IN all manuals of strategy there is some such generous platitude as "The aim of a battle is to defeat the Enemy". One accepts the general reasonableness of this proposition; but seeks some specified formula for carrying it out—such as that of the American Civil War General, who attributed his successes to "getting there first-est and most-est"—i.e., by occupying the key-position rather earlier and with rather more troops than your foe. Unheroic—but how practical! All Generals, from Alexander the Great to Field-Marshal Lord Alexander of two thousand years later, would concur.

How to convert this into terms of theatrical criticism? "The aim of the Drama is to deal with Men and Women." Unexceptionable, as far as it goes! To specify it a little further:—to skin and exhibit the living universal human being, to an extent that can shock a stalls-audience or a gallery-audience into a realization of its potentialities for genius (witness "*Lear*", witness "*Hamlet*"), or its weakness, failure, lack-of-achievement, will-power, concentration—and occasional devilishness (witness two recent plays, Ibsen's "*The Wild Duck*", and Strindberg's "*The Father*").

Both these plays are so good that they annihilate anything else that has been put on the London stage—I will not say for the last month, but for the last many months. Years ago I had seen each of them done superlatively—"The Wild Duck" with Miss Hermione Baddeley, Mr. Milton Rosmer and Miss Sybil Arundale, at the St. James' (1925), and "*The Father*" with Robert Loraine, Miss Haidée Wright and Miss Dorothy Dix, at the Savoy (1927). When one has once seen a play "perfectly" acted one

never wants to see it again. I shied away from the recent productions of "*The Wild Duck*" at the St. Martin's and from "*The Father*" at the Embassy, Swiss Cottage, as does a nervous horse. But in each case I dragged myself to them, for my soul's good, and in each case I was rewarded. Which means, in terms of the theatre, that my mind was lacerated and tortured—and, on balance, edified.

Why is Ibsen's "*The Wild Duck*" so soul-searing? One can dismiss its so-called "symbolism" out of hand, as being unimportant.

But what about that tortured and super-realistic study of his son, the younger Hialmer Ekdal?—who dominates the play. Who is always going to do something great—and never does? Who retires to his study every day after lunch to ponder on his (future) great invention—and comes to the conclusion, after many years idling, that "everything has already been invented". Who, in a mood of righteous indignation, refuses to take "bite or sup" within his wife's house—and then, being hungry, sits down to devour bread-and-butter and coffee, and to call for more?

No man, even after being tried in many battles, ever thinks that he has *quite* enough courage. (The next battle might have shown his cracking-point.) No man, even if he has worked ten hours a day at his desk for most of his working-life, believes that he has had *quite* enough diligence. And idlers always know in their inmost hearts, that they are idlers. Hialmer Ekdal, in his weakness and vacillations, is the living reflection of one facet of every man assembled in the theatre—for the edification and enlightenment of

his ever-loving wife sitting next to him—and therefore I say the play is a terrible play, and possibly should be abolished. But it was a wonderful, if painful experience to have seen it. And I recommend all who possibly can to go and submit themselves to the strain.

WITH Strindberg's "*The Father*" at the Embassy it was Ladies' Day for a little analysis and self-torture. Admitted that Strindberg was three times married, and each time more or less unhappily. Admitted that he had a strain of madness in his make-up, and was probably impossible to live with anyhow. Admitted that suddenly, in a flash of inspiration, he got hold of a plot—that of a wife who quite deliberately, in a declared contest of will-power and strategy, sets out to drive her husband mad—a plot that gave him, from its first inception, a hell-inspired chance to work off all his combined hatreds against womenkind in general . . . and then it still remains a matter of wonder, and even admiration, what a logical and plausible job he managed to make of it.

He does not load the dice altogether unfairly. The father is made a man of capricious judgment—if no worse than that. He invokes the letter of a Swedish law of the time, that the father and not the mother shall have the supreme say in the child's education. (Though even here a certain justice is given to him. He demands only that the young daughter shall go to the local town to be educated, and choose her philosophy for herself rather than stay under the influence of the bigoted religious maniacs who rule his household.)

The wife has, at Law, no redress—unless she can prove her own husband to be of unsound mind and judgment. This she proceeds to do, using each and every one of the weapons of the sex that is called on to do combat without physical strength.

There is a complete and almost intolerable logic about the sequence of events. She writes letters to his brother officers (he is in a regiment) and to his commanding-officer, suggesting that he is not quite right in his mind. She intercepts all replies to his correspondence—so that he thinks that even his friends and business contacts suspect him of

being irresponsible, and of avoiding contact with him. Using all her charm of personality she works on the newly arrived local doctor to prepare him for the fact that her husband's mind is becoming unhinged. The husband himself she works on by insinuating, with every show of triumph, that the child herself is illegitimate.

There is nothing in all this that a woman, determined to get her own way, *could* not have done. There is nothing, also, that a certain type of woman *would* not have done. Chechov, an astute and scientific observer of human nature, gives utterance in one of his personal letters to the fruits of his reflections—and he is not speaking through the mouth of any stage-character. He says, "Neither man nor woman is worth a brass farthing; only men are more just and generous". Driving this argument one degree further, Strindberg makes his woman out to be a hell-cat, untamed, and all the more deadly for using other arts than those of the jungle. But the most damning indictment of all is pronounced by her own brother, a clergyman, as early as the first act. He says that the woman has been exactly the same in character always:—"As a girl in the schoolroom, if she couldn't get her own way she used to lie down and pretend to be dead. In the end she always got her own way—not ninety per cent of it but a hundred per cent of it!" The play is a terrible play, and might be written-off as pure nightmare. Except that many wives (and many husbands) certainly indentify some spark of the eternal feminine in the character of the heroine.

It was as well played at the Embassy as the cast allowed. Miss Frieda Jackson in the chief part was brilliant—possessed of enough artistry in her own right to make us momentarily forget Miss Dorothy Dix's monumental performance of twenty years ago. Mr. Michael Redgrave seemed to rely chiefly on a fuzzy grey wig (its maker is mentioned in the programme) as an attribute of character of the Father. At any rate, he took the edge off the play by playing him as a weak character foredoomed to be broken. Robert Loraine of twenty years ago had played him as a virile character with no intention of subjecting himself to the

THEATRE

breaking process—and, believe me, there were some sparks flying before he, too, was beaten out on that fiery anvil.

THE history of the British censorship is a curious one. It was instituted by the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, rather more than two hundred years ago. Sir Robert was well known as the dirtiest talker of his own (or indeed of any other) age, and he introduced the censorship not to check licentiousness, but to keep politics off the stage. (He himself was an ardent pamphleteer in competition with such experts as Swift, Steele and Addison, and he knew well what the force of the written word could be. What could be the force of the spoken and acted word, applied to political caricature, he trembled at—and abolished from the stage. It must have been a mild amusement to him in his last hundred and fifty years in the grave that for most of that time the Censorship has been used as an instrument for keeping our morals clean, and our stage free from any unchaste word.)

But for all that, one wishes that the political principle of the thing could be to some extent modified.

I am calling to mind certain revues that have been produced recently, remembering that revues should be, in a gay way, the natural outpouring of British peoples comment and criticism of contemporary events—as they are in some Continental capitals.

Without any external outlet or target, recent London revues have tended to fall back on the theatre itself as the only possible source of mirth—to the devastating boredom of all beholders. Actors and actresses imitate other actors and actresses, unless they occasionally range so far afield as to imitate film-stars. A recent revue, Miss Hermione Gingold's "*Slings and Arrows*" at the Comedy Theatre, has an entire song devoted to a London theatre-manager, named by his nickname only—and I can't believe that, apart from a first-night audience, and an occasional pro. dropping in for a matinee performance, any soul in the house will know what the song is about.

There is nothing to be said, of course, against actors and actresses occasionally

mocking actors and actresses, and mocking managerial methods. In the poker-phrase, it keeps all sides honest. When, Mr Henry Kendall in the Savoy revue "*A la Carte*", sings a song, with drooping moustache, and dripping tartan kilt, and deflated bag-pipes:

*"With the rains of Cullodden
And Flodden
I'm sodden,"*

he has my sympathy. For every member of the audience knows that a film-company kept a crowd of some hundreds of film extras some winters in the damp of the Highland bogs while the film-masterpiece, "*Bonnie Prince Charley*," was being made.

But there can be too much of this "shoppy" professional limitation, and "*Slings and Arrows*" seems to me to have touched the depths of gloom by relying on it.

Give me the Crazy Gang (at the Victoria Palace in "*Together Again*"), rushing to hold on to the chimney-pots and window frames of their pre-fabs whenever an underground train passes. At least their predicament, real or imagined, is taken up with delight by every member of the audience. They are dealing with an at least conceivable happening in real life.

Better still—or at least on a more advanced plane of intelligence—give me a new little revue, "*Oranges and Lemons*," at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

Here at last is wit in its purest essence, with a definite claim, in several of its songs, to be more than actresses imitating other actresses—to be throwing, in the lightest possible manner, some light on the problems of the hour.

It has in it Miss Diana Churchill, a young comedienne now of something like genius. Also Miss Elizabeth Welch, a young coloured singer with a voice compounded of honey and black velvet—and a very neat sense of comedy as well. There is a supporting cast of far more than average ability; and stage-sets of such delicate beauty that one wishes that the general "slickness" of revue-technique did not whisk them out of one's line of vision so soon.

A revue to be seen—and, curiously enough, to be seen again.



CARNARVON CASTLE
(National Museum of Wales)

RICHARD WILSON

BY HESKETH HUBBARD *

TO many of us, within his limitations, Richard Wilson is the greatest landscape painter that this country of great landscapists has produced, yet the facts about his life are so obscure that the task of anyone who attempts to write his biography is not an easy one. Compared with what we know of Turner and Constable extraordinarily little has come to light of Wilson's life before he was thirty. To some extent this may be due to the fact that he seems to have been a poor correspondent. He kept no diary and he had no Boswell. True, there is in the library at the Victoria and Albert Museum a memorandum book of his, but this gives little information about his life. The discovery of a diary kept by Wilson in his youth, or during the important years he spent in Italy, would indeed be an event of the first magnitude to the little group that is patiently trying to put into order the story of British painting. As a field of study this story has been sadly neglected and the bald facts about the lives of our earlier artists have in many cases been handed down inaccurately, largely

from hearsay without confirmation. However, we should be vastly the poorer had Vertue and Redgrave and other pioneers in this field of research not accumulated as much as they did. The work of the present generation of enthusiasts is to sift and correct these inaccuracies, to add to the wealth of information of these and other earlier pioneer art historians.

Among the small group of men engaged on this exacting but interesting and often exciting task is Mr. Adrian Bury, whose new book† should add considerably to his reputation. He can distinguish fact from fiction. The dearth of facts about the life of Wilson are well set off by the wealth of anecdote and legend that have attached themselves to his name. Mr. Bury quotes many of the Wilsonian anecdotes with great relish, but is always careful to hand on the legends as legends, not as facts.

* Mr. Hubbard is a landscape and architectural painter and etcher, and also a writer and lecturer on art.

† "Richard Wilson, R.A., 'The Grand Classic'." By Adrian Bury. F. Lewis, £5.5.0.

RICHARD WILSON

THE most persistent legend is that Wilson was neglected. But he was never without his admirers, though towards the end of his life their number had dwindled to a select few, of whom Paul Sandy was one of the most enthusiastic and helpful. In some ways the material circumstances of Wilson's life resemble those of Rembrandt. Both at first had all they needed and Rembrandt more than enough cash with which to satisfy his collecting instincts. Mr. Bury emphasizes that Wilson was a well-dressed, attractive, sociable young man when his livelihood came from portrait-painting. He had wit and humour. Prosperity suited him. It was only when, like Rembrandt, he turned his back on painting what the public wanted, to paint what he himself wished to express, that his fortunes declined.

On his return from Italy he found a ready market for his Italianized landscapes which had something of the feeling of the work of the popular Zuccarelli. His prices then compared quite favourably with those obtained by the portrait-painters of the time. But in disgust he soon abandoned this style as too frivolous. Snobbery has always played an important part in the formation of taste and fashion in art. In Wilson's day there was glamour about anything Italian, just as to-day there is the same feeling about anything French. It was when Wilson abandoned the Italianized treatment of landscape for the rendering of subjects nearer home that the decline in his fortunes started.

WHEN, some time after Wilson's death, Haydon said that "Lambert got hundreds, where Wilson could hardly get shillings", he must have been referring to the latter part of Wilson's life. But it is true that in his lifetime Wilson did not attain the prosperity of Smith of Chichester, who deserves a biographer, or the popularity of Barret, whose success was a constant irritant to Wilson.

The decline in his resources must have been gradual. When he returned from Italy he was able to maintain his house in the then fashionable Piazza, Covent Garden, for twelve years. This establishment had

previously been occupied successively by Lely, Kneller and Thornhill at the peak of their successful careers, so we may assume that the premises were spacious, possibly sumptuous and the rent comparatively high. It was not till he was fifty-seven that Wilson was forced to begin his series of moves, which extended over a period of twelve years, to humbler and humbler quarters in the Tottenham Court Road district, which necessity and the attention of his creditors forced upon him.

The assumption that Wilson was neglected as a painter both during his life and until fairly recent times is manifestly untrue. Wilson's work was spoken of with respect by other artists who were his contemporaries and had a profound influence on those who followed him. Considering he was producing a type of picture—pure landscape—for which there was then little demand in this country, he did quite well. He was probably too outspoken to be very popular as a teacher, and was subjected to the usual amount of trying and ignorant criticism from third-rate painters, like Penny and others. Some thought his work unfinished; but the nobility, who vied with one another for a good Canaletto and who liked to possess something from the facile brush of Zuccarelli, did not disdain to have a Wilson on their walls as records prove.

Few landscape painters' works have been more frequently "faked" than Wilson's. Even whilst he was alive there was a considerable traffic in such impostures, his ex-pupils not hesitating to produce and sell counterfeits of their master's work. The faking of a picture is not worth the candle unless the market is known to be good. Some of Wilson's financial embarrassment may well have been due to the undercutting of his imitators. In less than twenty years of Wilson's death, Fuseli numbered him among the classics of the art.

IT is curious, and a little sad, that in this country, that has bred so many great landscape painters, it has rarely been possible for such a painter to earn a modest competence by landscape painting alone. Constable was helped by several useful

legacies; Turner made much of his fortune from engravings after his works. The majority have had to augment their incomes either by teaching or by painting scenery for the stage. Wilson's contemporary, George Lambert, did the latter. Wilson taught.

In Mr. Bury's final chapter, which he devotes to "Pupils, Influences and Copyists", there are at least two rather serious omissions. He makes no mention of John Plott, a Winchester artist, who, at the age of twenty-four, having served for awhile as clerk to an attorney and accountant, placed himself under the tutelage of Wilson almost immediately after the latter had returned leisurely to England from his sojourn in Italy. None of Wilson's pupils was of great merit. Plott is interesting to students of the life of Wilson because he complained that Wilson's fees for teaching were too high,

which is further proof that Wilson's standing was recognized in his own day. Plott soon realized—perhaps it was "Bluff Dick" himself who told him so—that he had no flair for landscape. He left Wilson's studio for that of Nathaniel Hone, who taught him to paint miniatures in enamel and water-colour on which his slender claims to fame are based.

The omission of any reference to Robert Freebairn is to be regretted because it raises another point of interest in the life of Wilson as an old man. Hobbes, in his *Picture Collector's Manual*, published in 1849, speaks of Freebairn as having studied under "the celebrated Wilson" and then going to Italy to study the works of nature and the masters to acquire a style of his own "more pleasing and natural than either sublime or grand". Redgrave, nearly thirty



SION HOUSE from Richmond Gardens
(In the possession of BRINSLEY FORD)

RICHARD WILSON

years later, speaks of Freebairn as being "Wilson's last pupil". If we assume that Freebairn went into Wilson's studio when he was sixteen this would make the year 1781, the very year that Wilson finally retired to Wales. Redgrave says that *on his master's death*, which implies that he was still with Wilson at the time of his death, "he went to Italy to pursue his studies in landscape art". It would look, therefore, as though we are to assume that young Freebairn went to Colomendy with his master. This stimulates further speculation as to whether he lived with Wilson and if he were present at the time of his death. Obviously, Wilson was never for long free of teaching. If Freebairn went to Colomendy other pupils too may have been there helping him, as we know they did, to lay-in some of his paintings.

Not enough has been made of a sentence in a letter that Wilson addressed from Venice to Admiral Smith. It reads: "Here I have studied Titian as much as ever I could, which I hope to show you the effects of in my future productions." What great landscape painter does not owe something, however indirectly, to Titian? The great Claude himself was such a debtor. The influence of Claude on Wilson is obvious; but I think it was from Titian rather than from Claude that Wilson learnt to design the fan-like tree and his method of massing foliage, for it is in the breadth of his handling of these perfectly designed trees that he differs from Claude, whose touch is sometimes lacking in breadth. The quality of Wilson's pigment that contributes so much to our delight in his paintings—its fat, rich texture, the crumbly impasto which he



DE TABLEY HOUSE

In the possession of LORD ASHTON OF HYDE

shares to some extent with his contemporary and contemptuous Reynolds—is in the direct descent technically of Titian. Wilson shared with Claude the love of low tones and of shadows that “tempt exploration with the outstretched hand” as Armstrong so neatly puts it. His feeling for light, in which he bathes everything he painted, as though it were a physical substance mixed with each pigment he used, was released by his study of the paintings of Claude, or Cuyp and of van Goyen. As a painter of light Wilson is in the front rank. He prided himself that he “could paint such sunshine as the flies delight to dance in”. This love of light he handed on to Constable, to Turner and to Crome, who, to the confusion of the *dilettanti*, copied and “pasted” the “citron visions” of Wilson with fitting reverence.

I said that the study of Claude, Cuyp and van Goyen “released” Wilson’s feeling for light because it is obvious it must have been in his make-up before he studied their pictures. So, too, must have been his “classical” feeling, for classicism is a cast of mind that cannot be learnt. When he first found himself face to face with a painting of Claude’s I can well imagine how a responsive string within him vibrated; how he must have felt *that* was the sort of picture he wished to paint. It must have been a great day for Wilson when the spirit of Claude fused with his own.

THE other painters who most obviously had something to offer Wilson were certain Franco-Italians, Dutch and Flemish painters. From some he derived the spirit and sentiment that prevail in his work; from others he learnt technical lessons. He assimilated something from Canaletto and Guardi, from Salvator Rosa, Vernet and the Poussins; but we must not forget that, like nearly all British painters, he found affinity to the work of the Dutch and Flemish masters. From besides Cuyp and van Goyen he extracted what he wanted from Berchem and Both and to these names I would add Pynacker. It was the “atmospheric” painters of the Dutch school that appealed to Wilson. He himself admitted

that he learnt much from Momper who, he foretold, would one day come into his own share of public recognition. So far the star of Momper has not risen. The work of this early seventeenth century Dutch painter is rarely encountered in this country; judged by the few examples I have seen he will never rank as high as Wilson. But so often a great painter owes more to an inferior one than to a great master. The paintings of Wilson are not just a hotch-potch of the characteristics of other artists. His vision was his own, his technique became intensely personal, his own spirit pervaded all he had to say. He saw landscape in his own noble way and founded a dignified and balanced art upon it. Without ever being theatrical he subtly dramatized landscape, as all great representational painters dramatize or slightly caricature their subjects. His skies were powerful and naturalistic. To him nature was the theatre for the performances of the elements. His Welsh inheritance enabled him to reveal nature’s true poetry. “There is such a feeling of exaltation about Wilson’s work that it is as if Nature herself were in love with him,” as Mr. Bury so happily puts it. He was able to express both the grand and the simple, “the power of the eagle and the twittering simplicity of the note of the wren”, were his. He was “The Grand Classic”.

Wilson may have learnt some of his technique from George Lambert, whose method was straightforward and workmanlike as we should expect from a leading scene-painter. But Wilson could have learnt nothing more from him. Lambert carried on the tradition of his master Wootton. Lambert and Wilson doubtless knew one another, for both were supporters of the Foundling Hospital to which each presented pictures; both were debtors to Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Poussin.

The resemblances between the colour of Wilson and Zuccarelli at times is marked. It is more than probable that the colours Wilson used for landscape, were recommended by the more experienced Italian painter.

If Wilson never practiced the art of the diarist he was anyway a superb and

RICHARD WILSON

experienced note-taker—a linear note-taker. He knew exactly how to make a graphic note that would serve him time and again for a painting. These drawings were his real capital—good “breeders” as he called them—drawings, not over-precise, that would set his mind working time and again, but each time down a slightly different course—something between the accidental “blottings” of Alexander Cozens and the suggestive “moppings” with which Gainsborough so profitably employed his evenings, when it was too dark to paint and he had not the inclination to play Giardini’s violin or Abel’s viol-da-gamba.

Wilson would never have made a great portrait-painter. He could not bear “the drudgery of copying faces”. I am profoundly glad Wilson turned to landscape painting for had he not done so the history of English landscape painting might have been much the poorer. The scarcity of his known portraits may be due to the same cause as the rarity of portraits by Hurlstone and other good portrait-painters; he may have painted middle-class folk whose portraits have remained in the possession of obscure families who still do not realize what they possess.

THE influence of Wilson on succeeding landscape painters has been immense. The debt that Morland, Crome, Turner and Constable—to mention merely four great names—owed to Wilson is incalculable. Turner went through a period when he tried to vie with the older painter. There is a small green-covered pocket-book which bears Turner’s label “Studies for Pictures; Copies of Wilson”. It is difficult to distinguish Turner’s studies for his own paintings from his copies of Wilson. At that time Turner studied closely and enthusiastically the canvases of Wilson, memorizing rather than transcribing them. I have in my possession a similar album of pencil drawings by H. W. Burgess, a fashionable drawing-master during the first quarter of the last century. This is labelled “Sketches after Wilson by H. W. Burgess, 1815”. These drawings were obviously made as

specimens for Burgess’s many pupils to copy; they show that thirty-three years after the death of Wilson the amateur was introduced to the art of landscape painting through Wilson.

Constable was enthusiastic about Wilson’s work. A landscape, which appears from the sale catalogue to have been one of the innumerable imitations of Wilson, was one of the small collection of pictures that Constable acquired to hang in his studio as an inspiration and corrective. Curiously enough he also owned a landscape by Momper.

Mr. Bury mentions some fifty-nine engravings after the works of Wilson. All but one are of landscape subjects. The list is small compared with the number of engravings of the works of his contemporary portrait-painters or those made after the works of Turner; but Wilson did not employ a school of engravers to multiply and popularize his pictures. Even this modest number of engravings, thirty-two of which appeared during his life time, goes to prove that he enjoyed a good public for his landscapes during his lifetime. The French copied his prints and were mean enough sometimes to attribute them to Vernet, Wilson’s “opposite number” in France.

Of the few books on Wilson (I think I can claim to have read them all, from Wright to Rutter) this is certainly the best. The forty-eight plates, eight of which are in colour, are very well reproduced, the typography excellent, the paper good. It is a piece of book production that puts to shame much of contemporary printing. Mr. Bury’s training and experience as a painter serve him well when he speaks of the technique of the master and enable him to write with sympathy of his subject in a poetic style that reflects the poetry of Wilson’s landscapes. He may add little fresh data to Wilson’s life, he has, for instance, nothing fresh to contribute to solving the problem whether Wilson ever married, but he presents the known facts ably and enables us to see Wilson in closer focus. The enthusiasm of the author for Wilson cannot but be infectious.



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The generosity of some calm fool.
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Or, praising, stop and seem to cast your eye
Toward some commensurate cold finality
That once you guessed, or dreamed, or read about.
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The door, the wind . . . the candle gone black out.
It is an arrogance to save your breath
Until the time when, self-possessed, you stand
With measured approbation where await,
In darkling kindliness, the bored and bland
Incurious angels of the nether gate.

ROBERT PENN WARREN.

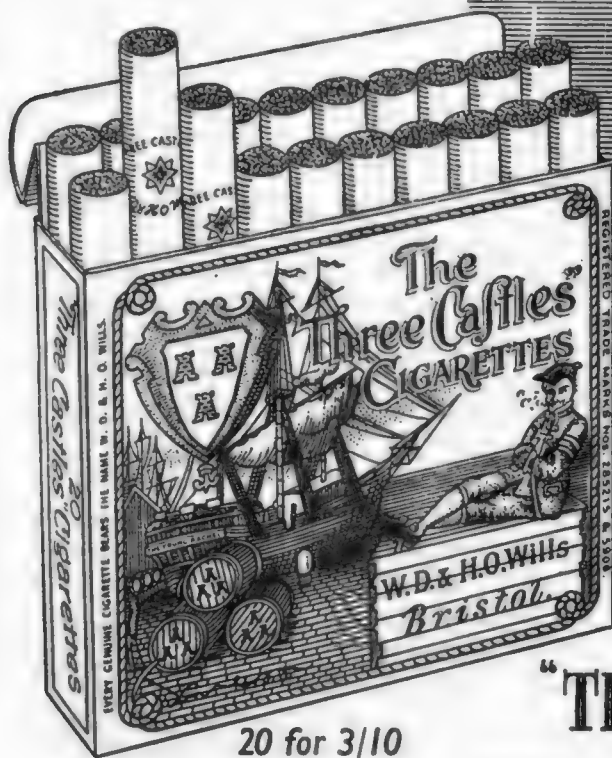
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FINANCIAL PROSPECT

By J. R. APPLEBEY

THE supply of money and its distribution reflects the general economic situation; it also provides a means of controlling it. The financial prospect for 1949 depends therefore on the combination of two things: first, on the present general economic situation and its probable development, and, secondly, on the Government's economic and financial policy as embodied in the Budget.

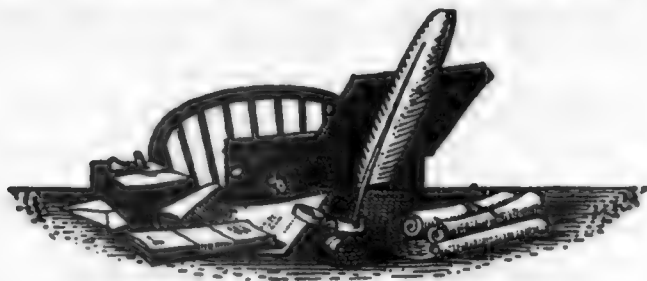
At the turn of the year the two governing factors were easily discernible. On the one hand, the reduction in the rate of external disinvestment from £630 million in 1947 to approximately £280 million in 1948, reduced the supply of goods available on the home market. On the other hand, the "real" budget surplus had been designed both to stimulate this reduction and to offset its inflationary effects. But the relative strength of these two forces, their balance one against the other is extremely difficult to estimate. Some indices suggest that, during most of the year, a fairly even balance was maintained. The limited removal or relaxation of rationing was not followed by a rush to buy. The indices of retail and wholesale prices, and the index of wages, showed little change. The average note circulation remained steady, except for normal seasonal variations. And Bank Deposits, though distorted by the redemption of the £300 million Conversion Loan and by the distribution of the £150 million Argentine Rails money, and though reaching during the latter part of the year the record of £6,000 millions, appear on the evidence of Lloyds seasonally adjusted index to have remained relatively stable.

TOWARDS the end of the year, however, there were signs that the monetary equilibrium that had been achieved was again being disturbed. The movement of the

terms of trade against Great Britain, which, after a pause, was resumed in October, will, it is true, involve a larger deficit on external account than had been estimated. But increased Government expenditure, partly on food subsidies, partly on the National Health Service and partly on Defence, must have reduced the Budget surplus below the original estimate; at the end of the year the wages index moved upwards; and a gradual decline in the long term rate of interest, from whatever cause, indicated that the supply of credit was once more expanding.

If at the beginning of the year the balance had shifted again toward the side of inflation, in the next few months this tendency will almost certainly be reinforced. The general aim is to balance the country's external account. In 1949, anyway, Britain's gross Marshall aid allocation will almost certainly be less than in 1948; its effect will be reduced both by our commitments under the intra-European payments agreement, and by releases of sterling balances to non-participating countries. Nor, to offset this reduction, can a further large expansion in home production be looked for in 1949. If therefore monetary equilibrium is to be restored, or even maintained, fresh defences will have to be erected. How is this to be done? Government expenditure is predetermined by what appears to be politically and strategically necessary. Taxation in its turn is predetermined by expenditure; and if disinflation through a budget surplus is to be reinforced or even maintained, taxation cannot be reduced; it may actually have to be increased. The new year opens with this dilemma. If the classical remedy for inflation must not be used, the only alternative is the maintenance or increase in present taxation. But if taxation cannot be increased, nor expenditure reduced, a further bout of inflation may have to be condoned.

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LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Edited by HUGH KINGSMILL

JOHN AUBREY

THOUGH Aubrey's *Brief Lives* have long been famous, they are difficult to obtain, and little has hitherto been available about their author. This lack, as far as a definitive biography of Aubrey is concerned, has now been remedied by Mr. Anthony Powell. His "John Aubrey and his Friends"* is scholarly without being tedious, and perfectly conveys the character and times of its odd, but illustrious, subject. If Aubrey is, in a sense, the inspirer of the school of biography associated with the name of Lytton Strachey, Mr. Powell, in writing about him, has scrupulously avoided the flights of fancy and exaggerated mannerisms which have been so prevalent in biographical works since *Eminent Victorians* made its appearance. He sticks to the facts, but by his careful presentation of them makes them enthralling. It is like a draught of fresh, clear water after coca-cola.

Aubrey was born in 1626, and, in due course, inherited an estate already encumbered with debt and in considerable confusion. After a somewhat unsubstantial period of prosperity he was dogged by financial and legal troubles. His curious disposition made him peculiarly unfitted to deal with this situation. It was not so much that he was extravagant, or imprudent, as that an inherent impracticability caused him to get into ever deeper difficulties. He had that very human frailty of putting off decisions, of envisaging action when it was too late or in terms which made it impossible of execution. The result was that in his later years he was always on the move, pursued by lawsuits, looking round for help and seldom finding it, wasting his energies and straining his not too robust constitution by making himself agreeable to friends on whom he was dependent, pining occasionally for a monastic life, toying with the idea of going to America, vaguely considering whether he might not apply for a university post, or take Holy Orders, but never deciding anything.

This manner of life, unsatisfactory as it was in many respects, happened to suit the compilation of information about people and things which was his governing passion. He was always, and in all circumstances, insatiably curious. However low his spirits or his fortunes might be, his curiosity never abated. While he was dreading arrest, he still could find time to jot down some curious fact or observation; waking up uneasily after an evening's heavy drinking, he still would add to his voluminous notes. His documents were his treasure, and, whatever else he neglected, he always cared for them, finally packing them off for safe keeping to the Ashmolean. This concern was justified, for it ensured his subsequent fame, and provided posterity with a mass of invaluable information about the temper and people and happenings of an age as troubled and full of hazards as our own.

* "John Aubrey and His Friends". By Anthony Powell. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 18s. net.

In a way he was a kind of journalist rather than a scholar or man-of-letters. The discoveries he made—for instance the remarkable one of the prehistoric remains at Avebury which so interested Charles II that he made a special visit there with Aubrey to see them—were more by chance than diligence. His scholarship was occasional, his industry fitful, but he never lost his flair for what was odd and memorable and illuminating in human affairs and in the human character. It was these qualities which made him so useful to Anthony Wood, his long association with whom is delightfully described by Mr. Powell. Wood himself was a pedant, but, until they quarrelled, he was immensely appreciative of Aubrey's voluminous contributions to his researches.

In his relations with women Aubrey was no more successful than in his business affairs. He several times entertained matrimonial projects, but they came to nothing, except, in the case of Joan Sumner, to yet another law suit. "Some of your intimate acquaintances," John Hoskyns wrote to him in January 1663, "have lately told me how extremely amorous you are by nature." Here, too, he was unfortunate, and recorded—as he did everything—that he had fallen a victim to "*Veneris Morbus*".

Essentially, he remains always an observer rather than a participant. If he vaguely inclined to the King's side, his politics were as undefined as his religion and his income. As Mr. Powell remarks of Aubrey's friendship with Hobbes, at bottom neither Aubrey nor Hobbes "was interested in material things—in what Hobbes called 'a perpetual contention for Honour, Riches and Authority' that goads on relentlessly the greater part of mankind. Their pleasures and their rewards were found in the shadowy and enchanted regions of the imagination where so much of their time was spent; and for both of them the past was as real—perhaps more real—than the present or the future". Aubrey's genius for friendship, for human relations, could have free play in a way that would not have been possible if his fortune had remained intact, or if he had found a place in the Church or public service, or even if he had made a substantial marriage. Indeed, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that although he often grumbled about his manner of life, and vaguely planned to change it, he really rather liked it. His restless curiosity required a constant change of scene, and to have disciplined his eager thought and observation would have been to deprive them of their freshness, their odd irrelevance and humour, and to have made them an imperfect image of the age. "Several of my friends," he wrote in July 1674, "dehort me from Jamaica; for why should I at this time of day, and being of a Monastic humour, make my selfe a slave and roast my selfe for Wealth."

Even without the *Brief Lives*, Mr. Powell would have been amply recompensed for the trouble he has taken to disinter Aubrey. The very circumstance that Aubrey was so little a partisan in politics or religion makes him an excellent window into the seventeenth century. History distorts because, of necessity, it implies that everyone is equally preoccupied with public events, with the momentous issues of a civil war or a revolution, whereas, in fact, most, like Aubrey or the Abbé Sièyes, are concerned rather to remain alive than to promote causes or vindicate principles.

BOOK REVIEWS

It is fascinating to see how little Aubrey reacted to the Civil War, the Commonwealth and the Restoration; how much of his life went on interruptedly despite the tumultuous times in which he lived. When, at the time of the Titus Oates affair, there was a danger of Wood being charged as a Papist, it was of his precious documents that Aubrey thought; Charles I, Cromwell, Charles II, James II, William—he watched them come and go, and the coming and going of others with them, from his own corner. It is part of the egotism of the pursuit of power to assume its universality, and evidence of the wonder and delight of life that so much remains beyond power's compass.

Of the *Brief Lives* themselves, their purpose is best set forth by Aubrey himself in a letter to Wood:

"What uncertainty doe we find in printed histories: they either treading too neer on the heeles of trueth that they dare not speake plaine, or else for want of intelligence (things being antiquated) become too obscure and darke! I doe not here repeat any thing already published (to the best of my remembrance) and I fancy my selfe all along discoursing with You; alledgeing those of my relations and acquaintance (as either you knew or have heard of) *ad faciendam fidem*: so that you make me to renew my acquaintance with my old and deceased friends, and to *rejuvenescere* (as it were) which is the pleasure of old men! 'Tis pittie that such minutes had not been taken 100 yeares since or more: for want thereof many worthy men's names and notions are swallowed-up in oblivion; as much of these also would, had it not been through your Instigation: and perhaps this is one of the usefulest pieces that I have scribbled. I remember one saying of Generall Lambert's '*That the best of men are but men at best*:' of this, you will meet with divers examples in this rude and hastie collection."

The best of men are but men at best—it was the very essence of Aubrey's attitude of mind. In the *Brief Lives*, in his fitful and engaging way, he left an imperishable monument to this proposition, and to it, thanks to Mr. Powell, we may now add Aubrey himself, whom Ralph Sheldon once saw "twice in the street, talking to himself and passing forward without regarding anybody."

Mr. Powell has been known hitherto as a novelist and critic, but with *John Aubrey and His Friends* he establishes himself at once as a biographer of unusual ability and distinction. Of course, a writer's work is a whole whatever varied literary forms he may undertake; and readers of Mr. Powell's novels will easily detect in his biography of Aubrey a certain characteristic attitude of mind and manner of writing. Indeed, Aubrey might very well have been a character in *From a View to a Death*, which has lately been republished,* or *Afternoon Men*. He had just those traits with which Mr. Powell delights to endow his imaginary creations—eccentricity which is implicit rather than explicit, intelligence which ministers to an inexhaustible and vagrant curiosity rather than to an orderly pursuit, an eye for what is bizarre within the terms of reference of existing conventions rather than for the vagaries of human conduct outside them.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE.

* "From a View to a Death" by Anthony Powell. *John Lehmann*, 6s. net.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

BEL-AMI. By Guy de Maupassant, translated by Eric Sutton. *Hamish Hamilton*. 6s.

FINAL judgment on a writer should always be passed by critics who use his language and belong to his civilization. If this simple and obvious rule had been followed in the past, literary mankind would have been spared many erroneous estimates. They would have been able to read Shakespeare with minds unclouded by the mystifications of his German admirers; on the continent of Europe they would not have wasted their time in worshipping Oscar Wilde, and might have noticed Samuel Butler. So let us leave it to French critics to decide whether or not *Bel-Ami* is among the major works of French fiction, and whether or not Flaubert's ardent disciple succeeded here in producing work of the "Madame Bovary" class. All that can be said with certainty is that *Bel-Ami* is one of those astonishing French books of the late 19th century which are as fresh and exciting today as when they were first published.

Because his brilliance is still undimmed, it is tempting to suppose that Maupassant was a writer very much in advance of his time. Certainly both in technique and choice of subject he was undoubtedly an explorer in the realm of short stories, but in this novel, in spite of the fact that he introduced a degree of speed in his narration which foreshadowed much of the best writing which was to come, he showed himself to be more of a revivalist than an innovator. There is no hint of the psychological school in this acute examination of amorous predicaments. It is more easily compared to great creations of the past than of the succeeding age. So far as I know *Bel-Ami* is the last notable example in art of the legend of Don Juan treated in the classical tradition.

Other writers artists, or composers (Richard Strauss, for example), who have been attracted to this magnificent theme, have been careful to set themselves at so great a distance from their predecessors of the 17th and 18th centuries that comparison becomes impossible. In consequence the legend has suffered horribly in modern form, because of the contortions to which the figure of the hero has been subjected. Our latter-day Don Juans have to be tortured souls, or reformers of marriage, or seekers

for the ideal, or some other such creature, all overtones and nothing true. Maupassant went back to the original and, with absolute success, made his hero what he was so obviously meant to be: a lecherous scoundrel. Here is the same glamorous and faithless lover of Mozart and Daponte.

Only in one important respect did Maupassant depart from classical tradition: there is no retribution in the adventures of this defiler of marriage beds. The statue (which is perhaps consciously retained in the haunting presence of Forestier after death), hardly gets a look in. The Don kicks him out with Donna Anna and all. Maupassant takes the cruel and comic view, and with such skill, that even in that final scene when an innocent girl is sacrificed in marriage to *Bel-Ami* we do not lose sympathy with him. Even in his vilest hour we join this monster of lechery and brutal intrigue in smiling at the folly of the world. In his introduction to this latest translation Mr. Alan Hodge speaks of Maupassant's "sense of pity". In much of his work pity is clearly present, but I find it almost invisible in this masterpiece. I think that Mr. Hodge has mistaken Maupassant's love of life for something else.

Bel-Ami is often considered to be a great work of pessimism, and a powerful expression of anti-feminine sentiment. I believe both these judgments are mistaken, or at the least need to be seriously qualified.

To take the anti-feminine point first. It is true that in this novel Maupassant takes a very low view of women, but one in which there is no trace of rancour. He considers that any man, though he may be as obviously horrible as possible, can carnally possess any woman, if he will only persist long enough in his endeavours to seduce her. That is all Maupassant says. It is not a kind thing to say about women, but it is not entirely undeserved. It is an exaggeration of the truth but not a spiteful perversion of it. Women dislike Maupassant because he laughed at them, but he never really disliked women. In this story, what pathos the cruel jester allows is concerned with the fact that all the Don's victims, with the possible exception of Madame Forestier, give him truly generous devotions. The meanness is all on the man's side. It is worth noticing, too, that



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Maupassant softens the picture of seduction by representing this lover as a captivating fellow, as handsome, glamorous, and brave (or at least seeming to be very brave). A true woman-hater could with perfect ease have shown the women enslaved by a man without even physical charms. But it would have been unlike Maupassant to degrade so splendid a story, because he was so ardent a lover of life.

For that reason I think it is wrong to describe Maupassant as a complete pessimist. The question is complicated. Maupassant was an absolute heathen, for whom the unseen was merely the uninvestigated, and religion and morality of any kind merely a collection of grotesque superstitions invented by half-witted old women and exploited by humbugging priests. So much for that! Was anything left? Yes. The world as a magnificent spectacle of life. Now Maupassant was far too intelligent not to see that so helplessly sensual an attitude towards existence leads to disaster, but this realization never tempted him to seek other attitudes, because he believed that no other was true. In that sense he was a despairing man, but in that sense only. He was, as it were, a man without hope who was infinitely consolable. He saw through the pomps and vanities of this world and enjoyed them enormously. He loved fame, success, and wealth, although he knew they were not worth having. That is not true pessimism. Critics of *Bel-Ami* have objected that it gives no picture of desirable life. I cannot agree. True, it shows nothing better than a very coarse life of pleasure which is never supposed to take you in, but the pleasure is so magically conveyed that we join in, fully knowing that we are being hoaxed. How different is such an experience from what we are given nowadays by writers who wish to describe what they do not admire! There is nothing sour in this great and amoral book, and the dark broodings (especially of the old poet, Norbet de Varenne), impress the reader, above all, because they are in such potent contrast to the passionate enjoyment of the visible world which this superb master of sensual description makes us share with him.

Mr. Eric Sutton's translation is extremely able. I have only one adverse criticism to make and that is concerning the expletives, which, I would suggest, are best left in the original.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES.

Novels

THE UNKNOWN SEA. François Mauriac, translated by Gerard Hopkins. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*. 9s.

VALERIE. Morchard Bishop. *Gollancz*. 9s. 6d.

DOPPELGANGERS. Gerald Heard. *Cassell*. 9s. 6d.

IRON AND GOLD. Hilda Vaughan. *Macmillan*. 8s. 6d.

TEN DAYS WONDER. Ellery Queen. *Gollancz*. 10s. 6d.

BURIED FOR PLEASURE. Edmund Crispin. *Gollancz*. 8s. 6d.

THE UNKNOWN SEA (*Les Chemins de la Mer*) was first published in French in 1939. None of Mauriac's novels shows more markedly how conventional incidents and ambiguities of characterization can be made by a great novelist to seem closer to life than painstaking realism and analysis.

All Mauriac's novels open dramatically, he sets scene and people in strong lime-light from the start. In this book the wife and daughter of Oscar Revolou, a wealthy Bordeaux lawyer, are dressing for a ball when Madame Costadot, a family friend, comes to inform them that it is rumoured that Revolou has been using his clients' money to support an extravagant mistress and is ruined. Léonie Costadot takes advantage of the shock to wring from Madame Revolou the transfer of her own personal dowry to reimburse the Costadots for Oscar's misappropriations. I don't believe that Lucienne Revolou would have given in so tamely but the scene triumphantly serves its purpose to establish the chief characters. Oscar commits suicide and his disgraced and impoverished family retire to their country house. Their one hope is that Robert Costadot, who is engaged to their daughter Rose, will honour his promise and take over the neglected estate which is their only asset.

In his handling of the relations between Robert and Rose, Robert's younger brother Pierre and Rose's own brother Denis, Mauriac displays all his mastery of the dubious shifts and mixed motives of the human heart. I do not think he has ever

BOOK REVIEWS



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written anything more touching than the
scenes between Rose and her reluctant lover,
the scene where the half-tipsy Pierre tries to
comfort the girl he has loved from childhood,
the scene where Rose, realizing the dan-
gerous potentialities of her restored harmony
with her brother Denis, goes out alone to
face a friendless and incomprehensible
world. It is Rose whose footsteps are inexor-
ably directed away from human happiness
towards the unknown sea.

It has been urged against Mauriac that
he has portrayed too eloquently the evil
passions of humanity; the portrait of Rose
Revolou shows that he can draw pure good-
ness with the same complete assurance. This
story of selfishness, malice and greed is
illuminated by the contrast of her simplicity,
which is never pietistic or mawkish. Special
praise must be given to the translator for his
skill in rendering into English the poems
written by Pierre. These play a part in the
action and had they been rendered less
sensitively some of the best scenes would
have been ruined.

A curious sub-plot concerns the fortunes
of Louis Landin, Oscar Revolou's devoted
confidential clerk. A note among Revolou's
papers reveals that the dead lawyer had
regarded his creature not with affection but
with disgust. This discovery changes Lan-
din's whole way of life: He drifts into vice
and is finally murdered. It is never made clear
whether the latent evil in Landin germinated
only when it was revealed to him by Revo-
lou's recognition of it, whether Landin had
always worked subtly on Revolou's weak-
nesses to ruin him or whether the clerk's
despised devotion corroded in despair. Like
Maria Cross in *Le Desert de l'Amour* Landin
is ambiguous; Mauriac, who has always
exercised the narrator's right of comment
with such authority, does not seem to have
made up his mind.

THE right of the commentator is exercised
vigorously by Mr. Morchard Bishop in
Valerie. Mr. Bishop is an extraordinarily
able writer, he has a grip on his characters
and their setting which comes within measur-
able comparison with Flaubert's. But where-
as Flaubert pursued Emma Bovary with the
unflinching hatred which arouses our com-
passion, Mr. Bishop fondles his Valerie only
to provoke us. Granting the difference of
race and upbringing Valerie Singleton is
perhaps no more foolish than Rose Revolou,

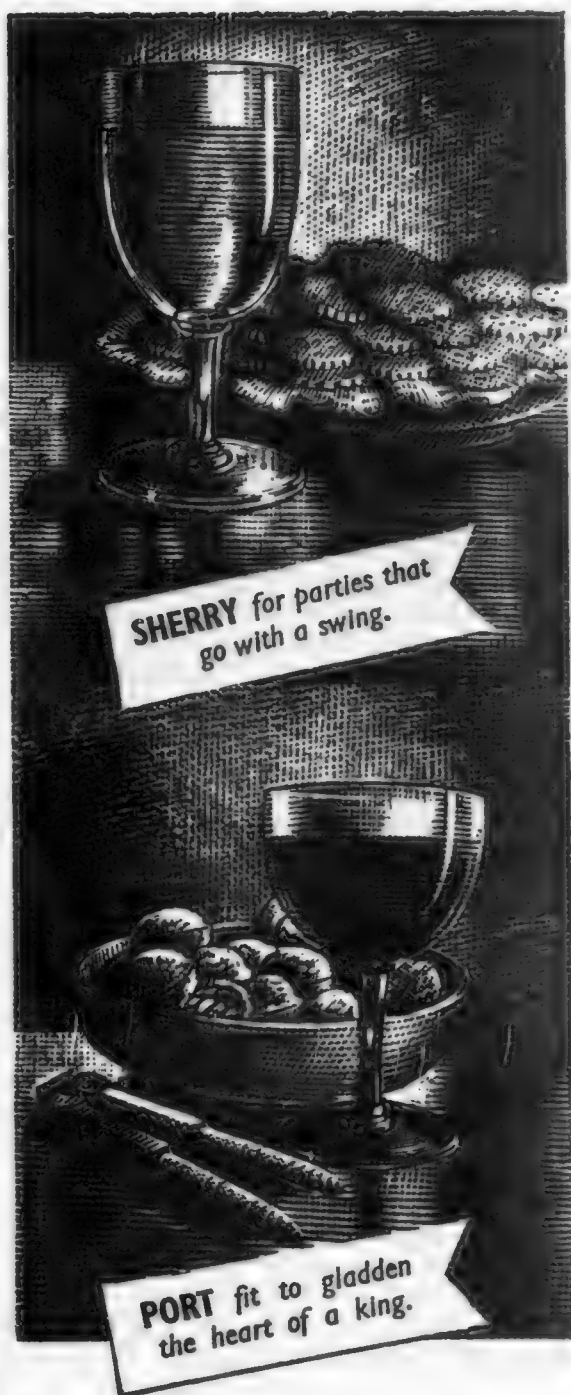
like Rose, she is unable to grab or bargain and few women in fiction can have drifted through the hands of such a dreary succession of cads. The psychological analysis to which the author submits Valerie may explain her but it does not dignify her, the story is interesting by virtue of Mr. Bishop's narrative gift but all his skill can hardly impart a dynamic quality to life in Bournemouth or persuade us that Valerie was anything more than, I suppose I'd better say a doormat.

MR. GERALD HEARD'S new book is less a novel than a speculation, more skilful and erudite than most, about our future. It is 1997, when society is organized on the basis of allowing man the fullest development of his psychological needs, under a benevolent dictator known as Alpha. The forces of the underground opposition select one of their number and by painful plastic surgery make him the physical double of Alpha so that he may assassinate the dictator and seize power for the opposition. The first part of the book is exciting as a story; the second part becomes an exposition of the philosophical doctrines of the California school. It is eloquent, ingenious and in parts persuasive, but the notorious difficulty of painting an inviting heaven dogs also the delineators of earthly Utopias.

HILDA VAUGHAN'S *Iron and Gold* is a latter-day version of the old fairy tale about the man who marries a fairy bride. The Welsh border country with its palimpsest of history and legend, is an ideal setting and one which the author knows perfectly. It is a risky thing to attempt to elaborate the shadowy vestments of folk story but Miss Vaughan succeeds to a remarkable degree in fusing the human drama and the symbolical interpretation of the story

IDID not feel that Ellery Queen was at his best in *Ten Days Wonder*. His ingenuity never fails him but the characters are bizarre and I am almost as suspicious of amnesia in thrillers as the policeman would be. Edmund Crispin's *Buried for Pleasure* I found most enjoyable, I got a great deal of fun out of Gervase Fen's parliamentary campaign and the company at the Fish Inn, not forgetting the non-doing pig.

RUBY MILLAR.



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Short Notices

WAGNER PARODY

THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BAYREUTH by Friedelind Wagner. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*. 15s. illustrated.

THIS a well produced book with a very suitable cover jacket. Also, it is amusing and can be enjoyed from many different view points. You may pass lightly over the introduction, but you feel that there is something strangely wrong with chapters one to eleven, because the author imposes upon her childhood-brain views and impressions of a grown-up mind. The result is that you have to deal with a monster-child. Once this is realized one may relax and enjoy the gossip like so many pages of an extraordinarily successful P.G.Wodehouse. Instead of bewilderment you may appreciate a child of five, or ten, or thirteen describing Hitler, who creeps into her nursery showing off with a small pistol; or a child that knows so much about the dogmas of her church that she refuses to be confirmed; a child that accomplishes feats of character such as to refuse to drink to the health of the House of Hohenzollern. Also at thirteen her "candid remarks" amuse Toscanini. At the same age she had German politics so neatly parcelled up that she does not have to think twice to say to her teacher in one breath: "It's all pretty exciting, but I wonder how these people are suddenly going to be statesmen. Reconstructing a run-down country is more difficult than brawling in a beergarden".

With chapter twelve her age and her impressions and acts become less at odds with each other. The rest of the book is made up of very interesting gossip, though it hardly causes an emotional ripple. A lot is said about various Wagners, a great deal about Hitler from a startlingly surprising angle—he after all nearly became her stepfather—and all through the book Miss Wagner glitters the pages with the great names of the musical world of the first half of the century. Yet there is not one memorable sentence about the composer Richard Wagner, although there is all about the Bayreuth part of his grandesque heritage. Miss Wagner is helped by a Miss Page Cooper to turn the whole idea of Wagner's genius into a parody; the title of the book does not relieve from this impression.

FRED MARNAU.

GOVERNMENT IN DEFEAT

THE PRIVATE DIARIES (MARCH 1940 TO JANUARY 1941) OF PAUL BAUDOUIN. Under-Secretary of State and Secretary of the War Cabinet in M. Paul Reynaud's Administration, April 1940 to May 1940; Foreign Minister under Marshal Pétain, June 1940 to January 1941. Translated by Sir Charles Petrie, Bart. With a Foreword by Malcolm Muggeridge. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*. 16s.

TO work in defeat tests the members of a government more severely than do the problems of a conquering government, and the former offer proportionately more interest to the student of human nature. "The Men of Vichy" soon became a phrase under which the members of Pétain's government were regarded as a uniform body of men almost equally worthy of contempt with Laval rightly as the major criminal, Marshal Pétain wrongly as a vain dotard. This unaltered private diary of their Foreign Minister, made at the time, reveals men struggling in adversity, the differences within a distracted cabinet and some of his own reflections. The account is the more moving for its purely factual relation; it inevitably reveals the absolute integrity of the author.

First we read of the last phases of the Battle of France with Paul Baudouin as Deputy Prime Minister to the redoubtable Paul Reynaud. Now that the war has been won, there may be little use in debating whether the British government wrote off France too soon, our divisions retreating to the ports in May 1940 instead of carrying out the agreed plan to attack southward; but these diaries reveal much about the bombing of the French warships at Oran with the death of over 1,200 French sailors, many of them machine-gunned on the decks by our planes, and the action at Dakar which nearly enabled Laval to carry his policy of making war on Britain. In this critical situation Sir Samuel Hoare at Madrid did invaluable work as the only link between France and Britain.

While French governments are notoriously mobile, their leading personalities are strangely persistent, and this book gives us many glimpses of persons now prominent. Paul Baudouin resigned in January 1941, as a protest against the ineluctable ascendancy of Laval. We may hope for more from his pen.

BRIAN LUNN.

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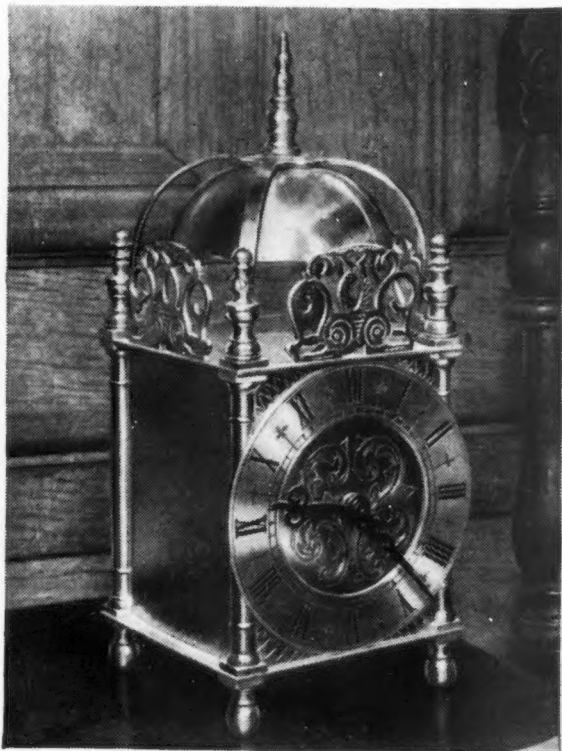
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ROBERT HAYDON

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON: by Eric George. *Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford Press. 21s.*

THIS readable and well-documented life adds a good deal to the picture of Haydon one gets from the Autobiography. It unravels his complicated finances and shows his ruthlessness as a friend and borrower; but it does explain why his friends put up with him. He was a kindly, gay, witty companion, one of the best talkers in London, and as much at home in aristocratic drawing-rooms as in the Fleet. His tireless pamphleteering and lecturing and his sense of showmanship did a lot to break down the public fear and dislike of Art. He persuaded some of the worst industrial towns to set up Schools of Art and Design and he made many of the new-rich conscious of picture buying as a respectable method of "conspicuous consumption". His campaign to make the State commission painters to decorate public buildings was eventually successful, but the failure of his own entry for the competition to provide frescoes for the new Houses of Parliament led to the

first breach in his insane self-confidence and thence to his suicide. Mr. George finds something to say for his gigantic historical pictures, without being uncritically loyal, and quotes some of the finest descriptive passages from his Journals. He might have given more space to literary criticism. After all, it is as a writer that Haydon still lives. Like Lawrence, he saw the world vividly by the flame of his own egoism and described it with the care he thought it merited as the background to himself. R. G. G. PRICE.

A SAGA OF THE UNHEROIC

THE AGE OF ANXIETY by W. H. Auden. *Faber. 8s. 6d.*

THE metre in which Mr. Auden's "baroque eclogue" is composed is (apart from interspersed lyrics and occasional prose narration) the alliterative verse of the Anglo-Saxon gleemen. This has its significance. The four rootless and frustrated characters, three men and a girl, typical products of the *malaise* of our civilization, who meet by chance in a New York bar on a war-time All Souls' night, have little in common with the legendary heroes of the ancient epics. But like them, they are fighting against odds in a dark world, ruled by fatality. For them, as for the Anglo-Saxon tribesmen who assembled to listen to the first Christian missionaries, human life might be comparable to the momentary flight of a sparrow through the warmth and light of a hall, out of the darkness and then back into the darkness once more.

Quant, Malin, Rosetta and Emble, drawn close to each other by their state of intoxication, make a common journey of exploration into the world of dream and private fantasy, where the commonplace is mingled with mythic overtones. One is reminded of the wanderings of Stephen Daedalus and Bloom to a new Aeaea in the later part of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Later, in Rosetta's apartment, she and Emble, the young sailor, prepare to go to bed together. Their casual attraction, symbolizing the love of which the world so sorely stands in need, is celebrated by the others as a ritual marriage. But before it can be consummated, Emble has passed out, and Rosetta is left looking down at him "half sadly, half relieved". Meanwhile, the other two men have

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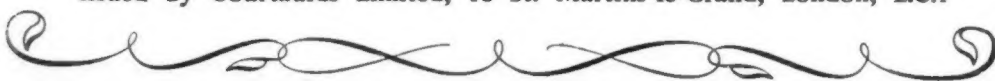
Production at Preston began in 1939, and very soon afterwards important savings expected from the new methods and machinery were more than realised.

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BOOK REVIEWS

departed to find again the world of sober reality: a world "once more reprieved from self-destruction, its adoption, as usual, postponed".

I am not certain whether this work will add much to Mr. Auden's stature as a poet. But he displays his intellectual brilliance in full measure, while his pitying sense of the human predicament—heightened now by a maturing religious consciousness—has not deserted him.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS.

ROCK FACE

ROCK FACE. Poems by Norman Nicholson. Faber. 7s. 6d.

OF all the young poets of the second line none gives me greater pleasure to read than Norman Nicholson. His work perhaps most resembles that of Vernon Watkins, among his contemporaries, for, like Watkins, he is a poet with roots in a locality, and draws his strength from the Cumberland earth. His is the poetry of man's relation to his natural environment. Amongst other things man is an animal of the earth, subject to the elements, taking on, like plovers and hares, the protective colouring proper to the nature of the rock, sand, sea, and sky that he inhabits. All this Norman Nicholson deeply feels and knows. In this, his second volume of poems, he has carried this theme to a greater depth than in his earlier poems—depth of penetration of the texture and quality of the earth; and depth, also, of experience of man's relation to it. Norman Nicholson's style has quite lost its earlier touch of Faber anglicanism, and is as firm in his hands as a flint tool. His mastery of the precise descriptive word suggests that he sees those fine details of nature that the naturalist and the geologist do not miss, but that not all nature poets are aware of. But nature is something felt as well as something observed, and one senses that Norman Nicholson often feels himself to be a living particle of the natural world, a kind of mysticism of the bones.

I know of few finer poems describing landscape than "Silecroft Shore" and "The Land Under the Ice". The latter, a kind of winter Georgic, shows Norman Nicholson at his best, as a poet of the harder, older, more masculine elements of nature.

"The birches splinter beneath pads of snow;
The gullies grind their grooves below
Porphyry crags, where fangs of ice
Prize out the hip-bones of the precipice."

The poem runs to some thirty-five stanzas, and moves from description of the landscape to man's inner experience of it:

"O in the white night of the bone I've heard
The senile north gods howling loud and high;
The wind god, shrieking like a migrant bird
That drills the carbon blackness of the sky;
The wheeling sun-god's drunken midnight
groan;
The dawn-god, crowing like a silver cock—
But always in the skull-pit I have known
The silent god within the silent rock.

The snow shall shrivel like an old man's skin,
The blistered leaves drop from the trees like hair,
The rind of soil shall peel and rot within
Till skeletons of Earth and Man are bare.

And ever to the true north of the rock
Is polarized the compass of the bone,
Pointing to time beyond the shifty clock,
Pointing to land beyond the homely stone."

Norman Nicholson is best known as a playwright, and his interest in character is apparent in poems on Naaman, Caedmon, Cowper, Emily Brontë, and others. In all these poems it is noticeable that the drama is felt as between the man and the land. Perhaps the finest describes Thomas Gray at Patterdale looking at Helvellyn in a small convex mirror, in which he sees the landscape of the tourist:

"... The clouds are still as paint,
And ghylls like tucks along the four-inch fells
Slant into neat diagonals. The lake
Is bright as sixpence; and if the wind
Bend back the bracken, it is but as hands
Rub shadows into plush against the pile."

But outside the glass:

"The breeze moves like a man; October trees
Scatter charred manuscripts; the sun
Includes me in its practice—I become
Part of a landscape that I cannot view,
And under the numbers of the wind I hear
Melodramatic crags and frantic thorns
Whispering simple names I almost know."

The group of poems "Silecroft Shore" works out a sort of apotheosis of man into nature, or nature into man. The Cumbrian landscape becomes an Old Man, a god belonging, perhaps, to the same pantheon in which Wordsworth's Lucy is the virgin of Spring:

"The old man sat in the waterfall
And the water turned his skin to bone.
Stalactites hung from his chin like a beard;
His shoulders were shelled with stone,
And leaves in autumn drop from tall
Arthritic thorn-trees by the limestone wall
On the old stone man in the waterfall."

KATHLEEN RAINE.